

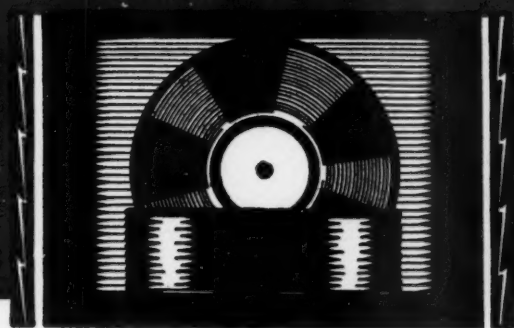
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The

# AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



A Dealer Protests, <i>An Editorial</i> .....	117
An Exclusive Interview with Richard W. Altschuler.....	118
The Dallas Gramophone Society .....	121
Beethoven's Opus 18 Quartets, <i>Peter Hugh Reed</i> .....	123
A New Hobby at 87, <i>Charles A. Post</i> .....	127
Correspondence .....	129
Overtones .....	131
Record Collectors' Corner, <i>Julian Morton Moses</i> .....	132
Record Notes and Reviews .....	133
In the Popular Vein, <i>Horace Van Norman</i> .....	153
Swing Music Notes, <i>Enzo Archetti</i> .....	154
Radio Dial .....	156

EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED

# RECORD BUYER'S GUIDE OF THE NATION'S MOST RELIABLE DEALERS

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# The American Music Lover

A MUSICAL CONNOISSEUR'S MAGAZINE

AUGUST

Volume 3, No. 4

1937

## A Dealer Protests

An Editorial

OUR editorial of last month, addressed to the dealer, has brought us a number of interesting replies. Several dealers complain about the price cutting contest which goes on in the trade at various times. This being out of our province, we can do no more than say that we too, wish, for the future good of the recorded business, that legislation was such as to permit the effective maintenance of retail prices.

Another point raised by dealers is best outlined in a letter which we quote here in its entirety:

New York City,  
July 23, 1937

"To the Editor of The American Music Lover.

Dear Sir:-

"The editorial in your July issue opened the way for all dealers to pour out their hearts.

"Why not tell the companies to cease writing advertising nonsense about music for a dealer's consumption? Have you ever looked over the statements made in some of their monthly letters? The world's finest music, outstandingly recorded, deserves similarly outstanding comment, both in advertising and in program notes. But, do we get it? We do not. Look over some of the dealers' letters and even the circulars distributed to the public. This month you can read

(Continued on Page 126)

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# Today It's The Music That Sells The Record

An Exclusive Interview with  
**RICHARD W. ALTSCHULER**, President of Columbia Records

(Editor's Note: This is the first of a series of articles from men behind the scenes in music.)

**"S**OMEONE once said that the young heart in learning music learns to love and respect. When I think backward on my childhood I remember what music did for me. It was all around me from the beginning, for both my father and his brother were proficient musicians, and through their music, I learned to love and respect my parents, my highly talented uncle, and the truly prophetic art in which they had chosen to make their career.

"Children naturally rebel against the study of music, even if they have an innate feeling for that art. Their respect for it is not immediately established. They yearn to break away from studies and return to play. But if they hear good music consistently, and are made aware of the regard of others, particularly their elders, for it, they soon develop the requisite reverence and then their studies take on new significance.

"My two brothers and two sisters and myself were given the advantage of musical studies at an early age. Our esteem for music was of course prompted by our parents' love of it and the fact that my father was a musician. In the earliest days of our childhood, we did not have the advantages of hearing as much good music as people of today have through the radio and through the phonograph.

"Oh, yes, we had a phonograph when I was a child. It, too, helped develop my love and respect for music, and especially for great performers. For the phonograph in those days exploited the artistry of the greatest musical interpreters of the day more than it did the music. How times have changed, what advantages the child of today has over the child of my day! With the development of more realistic reproduction that has taken

place in the past decade, we have seen the fundamental emphasis on the artist as against the music replaced by a basic veneration of the music itself. People buying records today want the great artists to play great music, an entire musical composition, not snatches or excerpts from it. There was a time when salon pieces sold to the exclusion of a movement from a sonata or a string quartet, but today it's the sonata and the string quartet which are taking precedence over the lighter morceaux, and not as isolated movements but in their entirety. An artist has to perform the best today on records to have his artistry endorsed and appreciated. For, it is the music that sells the record today."

As Columbia's president leaned back in his chair and glanced out of his window, looking northward over the green expanse of Central Park, a momentary, far-away look came into his eyes as though he were striving to recapture in its living picture the panorama of another day. The darting lines of automobiles bore testimony to the mechanical progress of the period. The extension of this progress to music had spread into other channels, a wider range of thought, a greater width of geographical exploration. The old phonograph belonged to the days of horseless carriages, to the period when a thoroughbred horse often meant more than the vehicle he pulled. The automobile holds a new significance, aside from its essential value, for it conveys us to the most distant corners of the earth and thereby broadens the scope of our existence. It does not limit our progress as did the carriage.

Richard W. Altschuler, Columbia's president, bears the distinction of being the first leading executive of a phonograph company who can claim to be a trained musician. Although he is a non-professional today, there



was a time when he seriously considered music as a career. From his early childhood upward, as he stated, he studied both the violin and piano. His father, Jacob Altschuler, an eminent violist, was his first teacher.

Mr. Altschuler stems from a long line of musicians. Both his father and his famous uncle, Modeste Altschuler, who founded the Russian Symphony Orchestra in 1903, were child prodigies. In their early youth, they both studied at the Warsaw Conservatory. Jacob Altschuler was a student of the viola, while his brother, Modeste, at first a violin student, later changed to the cello. The unusual musicianship of these brothers attracted the attention of Russian nobility, and their careers were actually started with a command performance before the Czar. Scholarships to the Moscow Conservatory followed their court appearance. Here the brothers studied composition under Arensky, Tanieiev and Safanov.

"It was Tschaikowsky who urged my father and his brother to go to America," Mr. Altschuler tells us. "He was very friendly with my father and taught him harmony for a short time. Tschaikowsky was very much impressed with the possibilities which America afforded for young musicians, although he did not enjoy his own sojourn there despite his great success. Tschaikowsky gave my father and my uncle letters to many people over here, among them one to Walter Damrosch."

The scene beyond his window did not hold Mr. Altschuler's attention long. Living in the past hardly suits his active and energetic nature. With his customary friendly smile, he suddenly turned and said:

"How times have changed! Just a short time ago I was playing Sir Thomas Beecham's remarkable recorded performance of Wagner's Prelude to *Die Meistersinger*. Every instrument used in that magnificent orchestration can be heard in the recording. What a change from the earliest orchestral recordings!"

"Speaking of early recordings," we broke in, "what was the first that made a lasting impression on you, Mr. Altschuler?"

"A recording my uncle made of Ippolitov-Ivanov's *Procession of the Sardar* and the *Soldier's Song* which Uncle Modeste arranged himself. It was a Pathé recording, and the

reproduction of the orchestra was better on the old hill-and-dale recordings than Pathé put out than it was on the early lateral-cut records. Despite the scratch of the sapphire point used to play the record, the tonal qualities were most impressive. I developed a regular passion for this recording, prompted by considerable family pride, of course. You see, my father was first violist in the Russian Symphony Orchestra and my brothers and sisters and I were always trying to hear his viola in those recordings, as though his instrument would stand out above the rest.

"Speaking of the *Meistersinger Prelude* reminds me of one of my earliest preferences: it was the violin arrangement of the *Preislied*. If I recall correctly, it was Maude Powell's recording. Incidentally, Maude Powell was a close friend of my family's, and at one time she made a notable tour with the Russian Symphony Orchestra. Wagner, you know, has always been my favorite composer. My father, too, was devoted to his music. Maybe there is more than a psychological significance in the fact that I was named Richard Wagner Altschuler."

Mr. Altschuler has been associated with the record business for over five years. Two years ago he became president of the Columbia Phonograph Company. Under his regime, the growth of the Masterwork section of the Columbia catalog has been most significant. He points with pride to a number of developments which have taken place since he came with the company.

"When I first took over my duties with this company," he says, "the concentration was on old and tried favorites. The emphasis was on the popular side of music — by that I do not mean especially jazz but the popular classics. Our catalog was badly in need of rehabilitating. In order to do this successfully I realized it was absolutely necessary to concentrate our attentions more specifically on the music, to develop its output in certain definitely neglected phases, for example, in the field of chamber music, where the output previously had been too casual and inconsistent. Heretofore, we had relied on our European associates to supply us with too much of the best of our musical output. It is a mistaken impression that one has to turn to Europe for fine musicians, when the bulk of the world's best are right here in America. Take the case of the Roth

Quartet and Miss Yella Pessl, the harpsichordist. Both received their widest recognition from their Columbia recordings. I do not think that there has ever been a more widely endorsed string quartet recording than the Roth's of Bach's *Art of the Fugue*. When we first signed up Miss Pessl many people thought that her records would not sell. But I was already aware of the interest created by her radio performances, an interest which was subsequently intensified by her widely praised Columbia records.

"Columbia was the first record company to recognize the genius of Roy Harris, considered by many to be America's foremost composer, and the artistry of distinguished musicians like the harpists Carlos Salzedo. Mildred Dilling, the flutist Georges Laurent, the violinist Nathan Milstein, and those sterling American organizations, the Gordon and Stradivarius String Quartets.

"When our foreign associates issue outstanding recorded releases, we bring them forward in this country as quickly as possible. We are justly proud that the conductorial artistry of such men as Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Hamilton Harty, Sir Henry Wood, Philippe Gaubert and Felix Weingartner is confined to Columbia records. In my estimation, the recordings of Beecham and Weingartner remained unsurpassed.

"I do not think I need stress here that Columbia manufactures the finest record from the standpoint of surface. Columbia records are more silent than any made. The laminated surface of our records is an exclusive Columbia patent. Into this surface goes finer material than is placed into any other make of record. Like many fine products, Columbia records improve with use, that is, careful use. Best results are always obtained in the reproduction of a Columbia recording with chromium needles; that is why we are bringing forward our own especially tested chromium needle.

"One of the reasons that our records have increased in circulation, we believe, is the fact that we relate as many units as possible to the library shelf. The growth of the record library in the home has been remarked upon and spoken of too often in the pages of *The American Music Lover* for me to dilate extensively upon it here. We were the first company to realize that the record buyer

would want a two-record release in an album and to supply him with one. The wide endorsement of this policy has been most heartening.

"Your readers may be interested to know that we welcome constructive criticism and suggestions, and that these are particularly acceptable through your worthy magazine, which has done so much for the increase of interest in recorded music in this country."

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## A NEW BOOK

AN INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC, by Martin Bernstein. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. \$4.00.

**T**HERE are quite a number of books like this designed to give people an introduction to music in the only manner in which true musical appreciation can be acquired: through some knowledge of the history and development of the art, the relationship of different kinds of music, the manner in which music is put together, and relevant facts about the men who made great music. Average music lovers do not know enough about the essentials of the art. They are not all aware that just liking the sound of music is not true music appreciation; nor is it necessary that appreciation be developed in one's youth.

It is in connection with the work being done along the line of educating young people in music appreciation that this book was written. Martin Bernstein is one of the musical faculty of New York University. This book undoubtedly grew out of his lectures and courses in appreciation there, because prerequisites of a complete enjoyment of it are some knowledge of its subject and an ability to read music. In fact, his discussion of technicalities throughout the book undeniably marks its source of inspiration as the classroom.

Professor Bernstein has written an interesting and readable book, which is neither profound nor lacking in essential scholarship. He begins with the characteristics of a musical tone, a description of musical instruments, their capabilities and functions in performance. Rhythm, melody, polyphony, harmony and form are discussed.

(Continued on Page 122)

# The Dallas Gramophone Society

THE idea of forming a society for the mutual enjoyment of recorded music really began in England with the later developments of the acoustical era. There have been many phonograph societies formed in this country with varying degrees of success, but none whose functions and purposes, we believe, have been better planned than those of the Dallas Gramophone Society. In the early days of electrical recordings, the editor and Mr. Henry Gerstle of New York City formed the first New York Phonograph Society. This organization functioned for about a year with a fair degree of progress, but subsequent efforts to keep it alive were unsuccessful. In a city of New York's size, where so many musical activities take place, it is unlikely that a phonograph society would ever intrigue the imagination of a group for any great length of time, or obtain the enduring support which it would have in a smaller city or town. This supposition is supported by more recent efforts, which have all been abandoned.

The success of a phonograph society may be said to depend largely on the congeniality and reciprocal interest of its members. If these qualities exist, the functioning of the organization can be made both enjoyable and enlightening; and the development of the record library in the home can be stimulated and enriched by a mutual appreciation and understanding of the music and by the mutual reading of estimations of and subsequent conversations about it. A well-coordinated group of people could in the long run make some valuable suggestions to the recording companies, and, if their suggestions were backed by other groups, sufficient support to sponsor many unrecorded items might also be guaranteed.

When the editor visited Dallas on his recent tour ahead of the Philadelphia Orchestra, he was invited to lecture on the music that the orchestra was to perform there to an open meeting of the Dallas Gramophone Society. This meeting, held in a small civic

auditorium donated by the city for the evening, turned out no less than one hundred people. The complete program, including Brahms' *Second Symphony*, which was to be played in Dallas by the orchestra several evenings later, was played in its entirety from records to those assembled.

"I have never been more impressed with the interest of a group of people in a program of recorded music," says Mr. Reed, "than I was that evening. Every person in the auditorium remained seated until the last side of Stravinsky's *Fire Bird Suite* was played, and many stayed and requested repeats of parts of the program. For example, the opening selection, Bach's *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring* and the *Berceuse* from the Stravinsky Suite, were among the selections chosen for encores. The whole program, with my own notes and those given by Dr. Sellers, the society's president, must have occupied an hour and forty-five minutes. Afterwards nearly a third of the audience remained and visited with me on the platform, asking innumerable questions about recorded music, reproduction, needles, and the opinions of the magazine's staff on existent works on records. The hospitality accorded me by Dr. Sellers and others connected with the society was both significant and gratifying."

The society in Dallas aims to have a public meeting, like that attended by the editor, once a year, at which a major program of a similar nature will be reproduced from records. The advent of the Philadelphia Orchestra in both 1936 and 1937 permitted such events to be arranged most propitiously, yet, according to members of the society, the public meeting would not have to be contingent upon an orchestra's visit to assure its success.

"The Dallas Gramophone Society was organized in March, 1935," says Dr. Lyle M. Sellers, its first president, "with a membership of twelve (a married couple counts as a single member, and an unmarried person is allowed the privilege of a non-member as a partner). The membership has fluctu-

ated between fifteen and twenty members. Señor Adolpho Dominguez, Consul of the Republic of Mexico at Dallas, was made the first secretary at the same time that I was voted president. (It is of interest to know that Señor Dominguez's wife, Milla, is a well-known soprano, having been at one time with the opera at Mexico, D. F., and is at present heard on a weekly radio program broadcast from Dallas by one of the big commercials.—Ed.) One member of the program committee is John William Rogers, music critic of the Dallas Times-Herald.

"Meetings are held on the first Monday evening of each month at the home of various members. The host at each meeting arranges the program with the advice and assistance of the program committee. The record libraries of all members are at the disposal of the other members in the building of programs. The host must prepare brief notes concerning the numbers presented. These notes should, in so far as possible, present facts or opinions not commonly known. This portion of the program must be subordinated to the music. During the intermission light refreshments may be served.

"A requisite for membership is the possession of a modern instrument for the reproduction of records, and a library, no matter how small at the beginning, which should grow. Each member pays dues of fifty cents at each meeting. Aside from a small amount which is kept on hand as a fund for meeting such expenses as may be incurred at an open meeting, these dues are awarded each meeting to the drawer of a lucky number. This prize must be spent for the purchase of records.

"Our annual public program, held in 1936 and again this year, presented a pre-audition of the Philadelphia Orchestra program with a two-fold purpose in mind: to allow those music lovers who could not attend the concert an opportunity to hear the program; and to assist a group of people who are not as yet familiar enough with the classics to enjoy them with some preparation."

Since the editor was in Dallas, Dr. Sellers has relinquished the president's chair to Señor Dominguez, and become active on the program committee instead.

"We have found our organization to be of great value," says Dr. Sellers. "It has provided us with much pleasure from its initial

meeting. Our membership is kept small for two reasons. We want only those who are genuinely interested to belong—and none such are left out. Also we cannot have a group that is too large as most of us reside in small homes, and we feel that the principal charm of the meetings lies in their hominess and intimacy. Recorded music belongs to the home, and not to the concert hall."

The American Music Lover takes pleasure in presenting the story of the Dallas Gramophone Society, to whom it extends its best wishes for a long and happy existence. Since the function and purpose of this society have been so well worked out, it is not unlikely that other organizations may be interested in patterning their activities along similar lines. Too, there is always the possibility that the formation of similar societies may be prompted by the story of this one. The editors of this magazine sincerely hope so.

—P. G.

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## Vale—George Gershwin

The tragedy of tragedies during the month of July was undoubtedly the death of George Gershwin, on the 11th, following an operation for a brain tumor. Though he was not strictly a swing composer, there is no denying that much of his music had that quality which makes it swingable. *I Got Rhythm* and *Slap That Bass* are examples that come to mind at this moment. But the contribution to jazz for which all jazz lovers should pay tribute to the memory of George Gershwin is that he raised it to a higher plane and helped make of it a form of expression worthy of being called a genuine American contribution to music. *Vale!*

—Enzo Archetti.

(An article on Gershwin will appear in an early issue. Mr. Van Norman, who knew the composer intimately, is preparing it.—Editor.)

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## AN INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC

(Continued from Page 120)

Brief biographical or historical data are given, beginning with Bach and extending through Sibelius and Stravinsky. The author holds some personal views but these are not fostered on the reader in a biased manner.

Altogether this is a worthwhile treatise on music, and one which any music lover who is more than superficially familiar with the art will find a valuable adjunct to his library.

—The Editor.

# Beethoven's Opus 18 Quartets

## A Summary of Estimations and Recordings

By PETER HUGH REED

**T**OGETHER with the *First Symphony*, the Opus 18 quartets are regarded as the most representative works of Beethoven's first period.

The composition of these quartets is generally conceded to have occurred during 1798 and 1801, Beethoven's twenty-eighth to thirty-first years, although sketches for some of them date back to 1794. This is a most significant period in the composer's life, one in which he was most successful and certainly happiest.

The chamber works of Beethoven that antedate these quartets all display influences of those who came before him, Mozart and more particularly Haydn, under whom he studied for a short time. These influences are traceable even into Opus 18, for in the third quartet, in *D major*, the first in order of composition, his emancipation from his predecessors is not yet fully evinced. Here, as Cobbett says, "the first movement, though charming in its musical content, shows no advance on similar works by Mozart . . . and the *scherzo* and finale might very well have been taken from some quartet or symphony by Papa Haydn." Only the *andante con moto* strikes a sentient note that is characteristic of the growing Titan. It is to the *F major Quartet*, the second in order of composition, but the first to be printed, that we must turn to find Beethoven breaking away from past influences, asserting his individuality and establishing for the first time his right to leadership.

Cobbett would have us accept the *Cello Sonata in G minor*, Opus 5, No. 2, as the true connecting link between Beethoven's early chamber music efforts and his first mature works, Opus 18. In this work, Cobbett states, we have the first evidences of Beethoven's daring with regard to style, which as time went on was to be so poignantly shown and developed in his later quartets. The most distinguishing evidence of this, he contends, is to be found in the sonata's opening movement, where "after the de-

velopment, which calls for no particular notice, and the recapitulation, which is the usual repetition of the exposition, there appears, for the first time in the history of music, a modification introduced by Beethoven into the regular scheme of the sonata." Although logically the composer has completed his movement, having constructed a sonata along the lines developed by Haydn, he is not content to add the usual "amen" or conventional coda, but instead he introduces a new system of development, as though he were anxious to restress the important elements of the movement. This novel and most effective ending, known as a "terminal development," which Beethoven regularly employed in his later compositions, appears for the first time in this work — written when the composer was but twenty-six years of age. It is an important point of demarcation from the styles of his predecessors, an arrangement that neither Mozart nor Haydn knew.

It might be well to point out here that Beethoven's early cello sonatas are considered to "show a wider range of thought and richer variety of form" than any of his other chamber works up to Opus 18. The late Paul Bekker marks their "deeper inner significance" as compared with the violin sonatas, Opus 12, composed later.

The music lover or student interested in making a comprehensive study of Beethoven's early string quartets, will find this sonata worthy of consideration.\* Despite its weak finale, which was undoubtedly written with the idea of allowing the cellist room for technical display, the whole work is worthy of careful attention. And, when it can be heard in a finely pointed performance, such as Piatigorsky and Schnabel give it in Victor set M-281, even the commonplace dance-like finale gains in significance.

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\*Bekker marks its first movement as an initial step in Beethoven's steady progress towards a sonata-form of monumental greatness.



Because the *D major Quartet* (No. 3) was the first in order of creation, as we have stated above, it is logical to begin our discussion of Opus 18 with it.

Although the influence of Haydn's quartet style is apparent in this work from the beginning, still the strongly contrasted opening phrase is a definitely Beethovenian characteristic — solid chords, for the duration of a bar each, and then a bar broken up with a flowing line for the solo violin. Hadow, in his excellent brochure\* on the Opus 18 quartets, a booklet every music lover and student interested in these works should own, points out that the moulding of a phrase in this manner "has the obvious advantage of enabling the composer not only to treat his phrase as a whole but to use its two constituent parts as separate strands, and to weave them, when occasion arises, into separate fabrics."

Gaiety is the keynote to the *D major Quartet*, although sentiment and pensiveness are evidenced in part. The *andante con moto* has nobility, but the *scherzo* is not especially striking. The finale is unquestionably Beethoven's idea of a *Gigue*. An early instance of the germinating motive, the *Fate* theme, of the *Fifth Symphony* has been noted in the structure of this finale.

The highlight of the *F major Quartet* (No. 1) is the glorious *adagio*. Although Beethoven confided to a friend that he had in mind the last scene of *Romeo and Juliet* when he wrote this movement, it is dangerous, as Hadow says, to lay any emphasis on this statement. The implication here, as in that of the *Fate* motive in connection with the opening phrase of the *Fifth Symphony*, is more a spiritual one than an objective realization of a program. Although the opening movement has been termed more "cut and dried than anything else in the whole series\*\*", it is nonetheless interesting, particularly in its inner or development section and in its "terminal development" or coda, in which the motto theme of the movement, sounded in the opening bars, takes on new significance. The *scherzo*, with its curious hesitancy, and the finale, with its buoyancy and elation, definitely mark the emancipation of Bee-

thoven from the influences of his forerunners. It is of interest to know that Beethoven revised this quartet considerably, and that a comparison of the details of the two versions, according to Bekker, "show that the revision (the one published) tends to a freer, more soloistic treatment of the accompanying parts, a clearer individualism of the violincello part and greater tonal delicacy in the ensemble effects . . ." Thus it will be noted his emancipation from the influence of Haydn was not a spontaneous development, but one entailing much work and self-criticism. If the first movement is considered lacking in the elasticity and freedom attained in his later opening movements, it might be well to consider its place in the scheme of his development. Its importance there cannot be minimized.

The next quartet, the one in *G major* (No. 2) has been called the "*Compliment Quartet*, since its opening movement has been found suggestive of an elaborate reception at a rococo court. The musical phrases here compliment each other like curtsying courtiers. It is an exceedingly graceful work, although less variable in mood than its predecessor. There is a Mozartean flavor to the opening part of the second movement which is quickly lost; and, in the recapitulation the part-writing is essentially Beethovenian. The closing section of the movement, when the melody soars, strikes a momentary note of beauty which is not soon forgotten. The fine unity of the part-writing in the next two movements testifies to Beethoven's growth. The vivacity and charm of the finale is irresistible.

The *Quartet in C minor* (No. 4), which, it is contended, was probably the last in order of composition, is unquestionably the most imposing of the sextet. Paul Bekker finds that this work "with its mournful earnestness stands as sole witness of an outlook on life, a restless dissatisfaction, the very opposite of the cheerful sense of concord with the world and mankind expressed in the other five quartets." Its companion, not to be found in Opus 18, contends Bekker, is the *String Quintet in C major*, Opus 29. (A recording of this work, it will be recalled, was recently issued by Columbia — their set No. 294). The individuality of the truly emancipated Beethoven is attested in this quartet. Most forcefully is this felt in the opening movement with its principal theme which has been marked as bearing a close resemblance to the basic melody of the piano sonata, Opus

\*Beethoven's Opus 18 Quartets, by W. H. Hadow "The Musical Pilgrim" Series, Oxford University Press.

\*\*Robert Haven Schauffer in his book, "Beethoven the Man Who Freed Music." Doubleday, Doran.



13 (known as the *Pathétique*). The originality of the composer is noted in his second movement, a *scherzo* in sonata form, and in the finale, with its coda of unusual length, in which the "music is at such white heat of excitement that it cannot stop until it falls from sheer exhaustion."

The next quartet, in *A major* (No. 5), (reviewed in this issue), opens with an *allegro* which Hadow calls "innocent as a fairy tale by Mozart; full of pure delicate melody and light handed adventure." Bekker considers this work "a perfect type of the concerto quartet." The *minuet*, which is given the position of second movement, "is one of the few of Beethoven's movements so named, which is actually a *minuet*." And the subsequent, *andante cantabile*, Bekker finds "a wonderful example of Beethoven's skill in preserving and exploiting the individual character of his instruments, both separately and in unison."

Schauffler points out that "in the *scherzo* of the *B flat Quartet* (No. 6) we catch Beethoven in the act of stealing the 20th century's thunder by inventing the first piece of jazz. For this *scherzo* is brimful of the subtle, catchy syncopations, the bizarre wit, and the perversely independent part-writing which most people imagine to be the popular invention of the 1920's." Hadow suggests that Beethoven nodded when he wrote the opening of the *B flat Quartet*; but the second movement, *allegro ma non troppo*, he characterizes as "quiet meditative music with melodies of 'linked sweetness' and long trailing tendrils of accompaniments; a feast of pure delight both to player and listener." The subtitle of the finale, *La Malinconia*, "represents a state of mind, not a picture or a story," says Hadow. This subtitle is really a reference to the *adagio* introduction of the finale which is probably intended to emphasize the contrast with the cheerful *rondo* movement which follows.

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Although several of the Opus 18 quartets are due for re-recording, notably Nos. 2 and 6, all of the sextet are, at the same time, now available in representative performances on records. For listings of most of these, we refer our interested readers to that inestimable guide to recorded music compiled by R. D. Darrell, *The Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia*. Two recordings have been brought out in this country since the publication of this book: the re-recording of the *C minor Quartet* by the Leners (Columbia set No.

288) and their most recent version of the *A major Quartet*.

During the Beethoven Centennial (1927) the enterprising Columbia company issued a long list of the composer's works on records; there were brought forward during the latter part of 1927 and the early part of 1928 recordings of five of the six quartets that comprise Opus 18, played by the Lener String Quartet. For some unaccountable reason, the *Quartet in A major* (No. 5) was left unrecorded by them at that time. Possibly, although we have no authority for our assumption, the Leners were unfamiliar with this score at this period, otherwise this discrimination must be considered an arbitrary one. The issuance of No. 5 by French Columbia a year or two later, played by the Capet Quartet, unfortunately did not satisfactorily fill the breach owing to the totally uninspired playing of the musicians; hence the requisite link to a satisfactorily constructed chain remained unrealized until the issuance of the Leners' recent performance of this work, which domestic Columbia brings forward this month in their album set No. 295.

All of the early recordings made by the Leners were praised at the time of their publication as representative interpretive reproductions of the various works, and even today despite their recording age, are still regarded very highly. The Leners ten years ago played with more energy and force than they do today. It has been noted in these pages upon occasion that their over-refinement of style, developed in recent years, has somewhat vitiated their former observance of the essential power and strength of a work. That they own a rare polish and unity in string quartet performance few will deny, yet their lack of vital assertion often leaves much to be desired; particularly is this true in repetition such as the phonograph permits. In the concert hall, the high quality of musicianship of these players may prove satisfying for the moment, and a first hearing of a recording of theirs may do likewise, but in repetition their silken-gloved texture soon palls, and one wishes vainly for a glimpse of the muscular hand beneath. A striking example of the change in style of the Leners is afforded in their two recordings of the *C minor Quartet*, the one dating from 1927, the other from 1935. In the early recording the vigor, the note of defiance in the music is more equitably set forth than it is in the latter version, where this required energy is refined almost out of existence.

In the *A major Quartet* (Columbia set No. 295), the Leners' newly acquired refinement of style is more in keeping with this music, in which the spirit of Mozart, reborn in that of Beethoven, speaks with a grace and charm that calls for such polished playing.

Of the two recorded performances of the *F major Quartet* (No. 1), we prefer the one made by the Busch Quartet (Victor set M-206), not only because it is better recorded (being more recently made) but because it is, in our estimation, a better poised reading and a truer realization of the spirit of the music.

There are three versions on discs of the *Quartet in G* (No. 2), but none of these, to our way of thinking, does notable justice to the work. The Leners' is undoubtedly the most satisfactory recording, the Flonzaleys' (circa 1927) the most arresting performance. Considering the wide popularity of this work, which is played on the radio about as much as any of the six that comprise Opus 18, a new recording of this quartet is long overdue. As it forms, in our estimation, the ideal introduction to Opus 18, we urge the companies to consider its early re-release. Perhaps Victor can induce the all-satisfying Budapest Quartet to play it for them, or Columbia the Roth Quartet. We hope so.

Of the two recordings of the *D major Quartet* (No. 3), that of the Budapest (issued in the past two years) takes precedence over the earlier version of the Leners. It is, to date, undoubtedly the most satisfactorily rendered version of any of the six in existence.

The merits of the Leners' two recordings of the *C minor Quartet* (No. 4), have been discussed. Although there is another version of this work on records, made by the Rosé Quartet, a more recent recording than the first Lener set, it cannot be said that the performance here is worthy of the recording. The Leners' early set is still the best bet.

Relative merits of the *A major Quartet* (No. 5), having also been discussed above, it remains to speak of the two recordings of the *B flat Quartet* (No. 6), made by the Lener and the Virtuoso String Quartets. If our choice goes to the Virtuoso, it is not because the Leners do not give a satisfactory performance, but because we find an all-around more vital realization of the music in the Virtuoso recording.

An ideal representation of the works could be achieved if those in charge of such matters would induce either the Budapest or the Roth Quartets to make them all. As it is in the ideal realization of matters of this kind that the phonograph can best serve the interests of music, we make the suggestion.

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## EDITORIAL

(Continued from Page 117)

that Menuhin is the man that brought back Bach's popularity among fiddlers, that Arthur Rubinstein, the pianist, born in 1886, is 75 years old, and that he sprang up about the time of Chopin and Liszt. (Look up Chopin's period, he died in 1849.) The prize of 'em all is the exploitation of Tschaiikowsky's *Romeo and Juliet* (Overture-Fantasia) in Victor's latest counter circular as "one of the most intensely dramatic and romantic pieces of music in the *entire operatic literature* (italics ours)." I'd love to hear the opera!

"And further read the blurbs about Mozart's *F major Quartet*, 'his last and most difficult' (Columbia) and 'revealing his incomparable genius in its full flower' (Victor). If I sprang this on some of my best customers, they'd laugh at me, just as they do when they read the circulars off the counter. This is not one of Mozart's great quartets.

"The best dealers know something about music today, maybe not as much as they should, but enough to know when their intelligence is insulted, to say nothing about their customers'!

"Maybe you'll be afraid to publish this, but if you're out to do a real service to recorded music, I believe you won't be.

"Incidentally your magazine gets better every issue. Keep the good work up.

Cooperatively yours,  
"Manhattan."

One wants to become facetious after reading this letter and paraphrase a popular expression—"ain't music grand"! But unfortunately, the statements excoriated by our dealer-correspondent are distributed among too many people, who not knowing, accept such tripe as veritable and absolute, so facetiousness is inappropriate. We agree with our correspondent that "the world's finest music deserves outstanding comment."

# A New Hobby at 87

By CHARLES A. POST

ON the evening of October 27th, 1935, I read in the *Readers' Digest* a very interesting and well told story, called "Trying for Records", a reprint from Scribner's of that month. As the next day was to be my 87th birthday, it occurred to me that this searching for and collecting of phonograph records of the best voices and instrumentalists of bygone days would be an interesting hobby for an old man to mount and ride away.

Having for some years past, from force of circumstance, had to drop expensive amusements and collections, I was more than glad to find a field of such high adventure that promised so much at very little cost, and in the months past, since that eventful October evening, that promise has been kept surprisingly well.

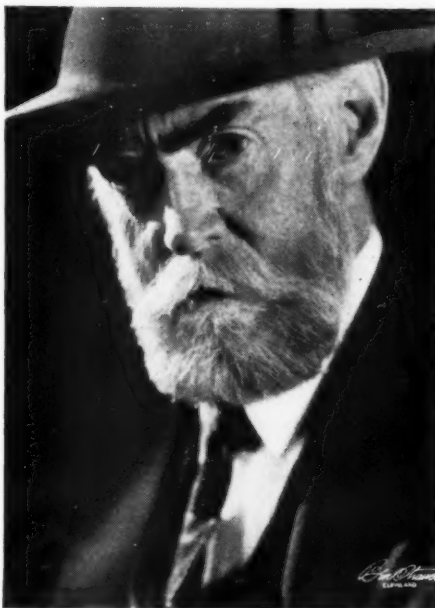
On the evening of my birthday, October 28th, I was honor guest at a small family dinner at the home of my niece. As I boldly announced my newest take-up there were indulgent smiles and mild chaff, but later in the evening one of my grandnieces, a generous young lady, brought out the family collection of records and we went over them together with the result that when I left for home I was well started on my way as a collector with seventeen records — one or two Caruso's, some Galli-Curci's and several other good vocal and instrumental selections. Among the voice records was one by an artist of whom I had never heard, Marie Michalowa; her voice was charming and I learned that her records are considered very choice and so I valued my one example very highly; and then to me came a couple who are my very good friends, and provoking me to envy and covetousness, told of having three of her records.

On the day after I had received this liberal donation and was really started, I did nothing along the line of collecting but wrote one or two letters to other collectors of whom I had heard, one being Dr. Mytinger of Chillicothe, Ohio, the author of the interesting and impelling article which as it were pushed me off the dock and compelled me to swim out into the unknown sea of records — and that is no idle metaphor as they seem at times to come in tides bearing mostly trash but now and then a gem. Thus ended the second day of my new venture.

Secure in possession of the seventeen records mentioned, on the morning of October 30th, I started out early, blindly, but boldly, wondering what I should do for a victrola to try out my records on, but at my first call, made at a large warehouse and store of the Salvation Army, lo and behold! a large card printed in big type stared at me from the show window with the challenging question, "Have you a Victrola in your home?" And went on, "Now is the time to buy here as

long as they last at \$1.50 for a Victrola with ten records thrown in."

Entering, I found a well arranged but crowded old book department where the records and musical instruments are also kept. I selected under the advice of the manager of that department eleven records; there were five Caruso's (two of them solos), one duet (Caruso and Frances Alda), a sextet (Caruso, Tetrassini, Amato, etc.), and a quartet (Caruso, Abbott, Homer and Scotti), also in the lot one Evan Williams, one Gorgoza, one Farrar



*The Author*

and one Alice Neilson. Then I asked, "What sort of a Victrola can you sell me for \$1.50?" In answer to this they rolled up to me a fine looking Victrola that I am told must originally have cost from \$100 to \$150. Still wondering I again inquired, "But what part do I get for \$1.50?" The answer was, "Why you get this Victrola as it stands," and they wound it up, put on a record and played it for me, the Victrola proving to be in perfect condition and of an unusually pleasing tone. I immediately paid for the instrument, and still a bit dazed at the price said, "I will send for it in a day or two,"

when the salesman said, "But don't you want it delivered?" Of course I did and the next morning before I was up it was brought to the door of my hotel apartment by two men who, upon my opening the door, rolled it into the room and twenty records with it instead of the ten promised, which liberality reminded me of the story about the man who had a large tract of very undesirable wild and rugged land which he had been for years trying to sell, but no takers at any price. However, one day returning from a visit to the land he announced to his startled family that he had sold 1,000 acres of the land for \$500. They just couldn't believe such a thing possible, but were convinced and delighted when he produced the \$500 in cash, and then went on to say, "But that ain't the best of it. I found out the fellow that bought it couldn't read and so I deeded him 2,000 acres."

Starting out with the idea of securing many records by asking friends for their cast-off and stored-away material, I soon found several obstacles to this sort of campaign. Men, friends to whom I appealed, cheerfully and promptly said something to the effect — "Yes, we have a lot of that old junk somewhere, I'll look it up, and you're welcome to it." And then, as happened in several such cases, the next time I met them and the subject was brought up they seemed a bit embarrassed to confess that the wife of their bosom had sentimental objections to parting with what were really records of the past family life as the children had so enjoyed them as they grew up. Then again, some forgot all about it, others couldn't get over the idea that what I wanted was just classical numbers and were inclined to send me collections of jazz and comic numbers, which if desired I could get by the ton (no exaggeration) at second hand stores. But there were a few exceptions to this, among them, the efficient and popular Librarian who generously gave me twenty-eight out of his fine and carefully selected collection; then again, a courteous, dignified professor of Philosophy brought to my room and presented me with a number of excellent symphonic examples from his marvelous collection (the work of more than twenty years) which, numbering over 1,000 discs, occupies an annex to his music room, being carefully bestowed in cabinets, perfectly catalogued, and altogether in most admired order; nor do I forget the gracious lady who encouraged me early in my campaign by the gift of a rare and brilliant number by Calvé; and then one who had been a housekeeper for fourteen years in our family sent me as a surprise from far Lake Superior shores some cherished records which I highly value. But I soon learned that for the most part anyone starting such a hunt must depend upon his own efforts, as I have done, hunting my prey in a great variety of habitats, such as junk shops, Salvation Army stations and all sorts of second hand stores, front rooms, back rooms and basements. Usually the records were very dusty yet, exceptionally, some lots were "as new", showing careful selection by musicians who knew and sought only the best numbers of the great artists and had cared for them well.

Skipping a lot of days in my journal of which some were successful and satisfactory, others lean and disappointing, I come to November 29th when I picked up a good record of the great *Sextette* from *Lucia*, one Geraldine Farrar, two by Alma Gluck and Louise Homer, two violin numbers by Maud Powell, one Kreisler, and two fine selections by the great bass, Herbert Witherspoon, the last delighting me, because years before I had known

and liked him well, playing golf with him and Mrs. Witherspoon one summer when we were living at the same country club.

On December 5th, I seem to have had a red letter day, gathering in thirty-two, among them a violin number by Jascha Heifetz of whom I had no example, a cello number, a Rachmaninoff piano number, then a symphony by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, and another fine symphony by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, one vocal record by Chaliapin, one by Schumann-Heink, an Olga Samaroff, and an enjoyable duet by Alma Gluck and Zimbalist. And so it went and has gone on until the present with varying degrees of success, and I learning something new about the game with every raid I made.

But returning to my journal I find that on June 18th I was called in while passing a second hand store, by the proprietor, one of my recently acquired Jewish friends, and shown a fine album of records which after examination I bore away. It contained twelve in all, six of them Caruso's and the others also by real artists. All were in perfect condition as was the album after it was dusted off, the whole bearing evidence of having been carefully gathered by some discriminating collector, and I wish I knew who it was! June 25th I picked up two numbers by Gorgoza, one by Evan Williams, one fine Paderewski, and one disc of war songs which I think is in a way historical but would probably be scoffed at by the orthodox collector of greater experience and discrimination.

Then came THE DAY (July 3) when moved by a strong mental urge, a suggestion of the subconscious, a "hunch", or call it what you please, I found myself again in a dingy basement where I'd been three times before picking out an occasional good one from among 1000 dusty, dirty records stored in a corner. As in the dim light I sought that corner I stubbed my toe against a box not there days before. Looking closely I found two boxes like a salesman's portable sample cases with locks and handles. Opening the larger, which was made to take in 12-inch records, the other being for 10-inch, I began to pull out high grade "Red Seals" one after another until almost incredulous I sat back and wondered if it were really true, and then began again until I had selected twenty-eight among them, ten fine Caruso's, seven of them new to me. In this lot were several by other desirable artists I'd no examples of before — Emma Eames and Rosa Ponselle among them. My haul from those two boxes eventually ran up to forty-four and I bought the boxes as well, all at most reasonable prices. What a day! What a day! And I am still wishing I could know who so carefully, wisely and no doubt lovingly selected and collected those splendid examples and why he or she had to part with them after so much labor and care.

In this search one meets not only interesting fellow seekers but dealers as well. One kindly searcher who has helped me haul over dusty piles two or three times, gathers for himself old time popular music, having now over 3,000 records stored away in soap boxes. He has given me timely tips as to where lurked some that might interest me.

Among those who sell I found an interesting Englishman born in London and once a choir boy in St. Paul's Cathedral, who, now fated to traffic in jazz and fox trots, is at heart true to his early training and so prefers classical and church music.

admiring especially works of the great master, Handel.

I recently have been told by leading dealers that "interest and demand for records is growing every day." This is verified at our grand Public Library where, with a collection of about 1200, they are loaning more and more from week to week. Records are to be found in the Division of Fine Arts and can be borrowed on the same terms as books, six records being considered equivalent to one book. Thus they are established as of educational value as well as for entertainment and amusement. I quote from information received from the Library: "The phonograph records are borrowed by young music students and adult music lovers. The types of records most in demand are orchestral music, chamber music, operatic arias and song records. Many school teachers request folk dance music, music for rhythmic games, marches, etc. We are able to supply marches and records for music appreciation classes, but have no folk dance or rhythmic game records. Some readers testing out their knowledge of French borrow the operatic arias in French for that purpose."

Is it of interest for me to tell that I am a rather cross old bachelor? And thus, that if I want to hear a Caruso, or Gogorza, or Gigli, or Amato, or Calvé, or Tetrazzini, or Schumann-Heink, or charming Michalowa, "a voice of velvety softness", or peerless Del Monte, "one of the greatest sopranos of all times" and still singing at La Scala in Milan, render an aria for me at my always late bedtime, there is none to hinder or object. Or, if in other mood I summon Josef Hofmann, Paderewski or Samaroﬀ to the piano, or listen to a splendid orchestra at Milan, or Philadelphia or elsewhere, render a grand symphony or give ear to such great violinists as Elman, Zimbalist or Maud Powell with her harp accompaniment, or if in lighter vein I select a harmonious accordion number or a rattling dashing banjo solo or duet (I have them), either morning, noon or night, there is no one to say "That gives me a headache" or words to that effect. Thus I've found in these discs great pleasure and much recreation for myself in lonely hours, and sometimes my pleasures are doubled when shared by friends who may come in to listen to some "new ones" or ask me to "put on" an old favorite.

And so, "going on eighty-nine", with but a year's experience as a record hunter and devotee, on the evening of my eighty-eighth birthday, I gave a concert to a select circle of friends embracing artists, musicians, University professors, librarians and some leading bankers, attorneys and other business men accompanied by many charming ladies. I gave this concert in a little gem of a theatre in the hotel in which I live. Ordinarily this theatre seats 60 persons; we, however, crowded in and not too uncomfortably, about 75.

I am most grateful that even so late in life has come to me such a pleasing and elevating recreation. Always fond of music but with neither time nor talent for it personally I have during these past few months learned much of the great composers, vocalists and instrumentalists of the past whose noble productions have been preserved for us by the magic of inspired scientists and inventors. Some of these great ones, before this but names to me, have become most interesting and delightful personages. Other stars of great magnitude, before this entirely unheard of and unknown, have arisen above my horizon to charm and dazzle by their (to me) belated light.

## CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of The American Music Lover:

Having a free afternoon ahead of me I can think of nothing better than writing you a few random observations and a hearty hurrah for your excellent magazine.

Enjoyed Walter Legge on Bruckner in the March issue ever so much.

As to Herr Pringsheim and his Mahler — this Mahler who "up to the present, (is) the last symphonic composer of really great style and form." Those, Klaus, are strong words. I refer you to the seven symphonies of Jan Sibelius. Perhaps to the good Herr K. P. they have no style or form?

By the way, Mr. Reed — was rather mystified by your own write-up of *Tapiola*. Why isn't this Sibelius at his greatest? You do not tell us about that? Cecil Gray, Constant Lambert and several others apparently think it marks the high spot of the master's creative output. I do not agree with them, but would like to know why you do not either.

Mr. Macalpine's letter in February issue has something. Please do a little crusading for proper alignment of pick-ups. A little merry hell in print might do RCA a little good. Certainly they are not the only offenders however, but perhaps by a very small adjustment in the scheme of the present tone-arms, they might be able to correct past faults and give us something even better in the future. Other companies would follow suit. Don't they always?

Was amused to read in Radio Notes that Hans Lange, assistant conductor of the N. Y. Philharmonic, etc. Please! He's a full fledged Chicagoan now. We've taken him to our bosom — I hope for life . . . .

Best of fortune to your publication.

Sincerely,

JOHN H. SPEAR.

Chicago, Ill. May, 1937.

\* \* \* \*

*Editor's Note:* There is room for disagreement with Mr. Pringsheim's statement, but there are many points of interest in his article which deserve to be read and appreciated. As regards Sibelius' *Tapiola*, we do not think its thematic material of great consequence, but we mark the work as great from its orchestral side. Some of the most expressive and eloquent scoring for the brasses is to be found in this work.

Our readers will, we hope, welcome the news that an article on aligning the pick-up is being written for us, and that this is our big crusading point for the coming year.

It does look as though some of us still treasured Hans Lange's memory in New York, and hated to admit that he's left us.

(Continued on Next Page)



## BACK ISSUES

To the American Music Lover:

Please accept my subscription to your magazine. Also, I would like to know how long you have been publishing this fine monthly, and if it is possible to obtain all back numbers. To my knowledge, no newsstand stocks your magazine in Los Angeles. Will you let me know of any that do so that I can pass the information on to any musically inclined friends who might want copies.

Respectfully yours,

C. RUSSELL KEEVER.

Hollywood, Calif.

*Editor's Note:* All back issues are available. The first 24 copies can be procured at this time for \$3.50. There are two dealers in Los Angeles who stock the magazine — Birkel-Richardson Co., and the Los Angeles Music Co.

## BACH TRANSCRIPTIONS

To the Editor of The American Music Lover:

The question of Bach transcriptions resolves itself into a matter of appropriateness, about which no arbitrary opinion can be expressed. It is always more or less a matter of personal orientation. To my way of thinking, a transcription is good if it adds no incongruous or irrelevant matter or subtracts nothing of the essentiality of the composition itself; and, furthermore, if it preserves the spirit of the music.

There is no justification, for example, for rendering Bach as if he were a XIXth Century romantic-emotionalist, as has been done in the recorded versions for orchestra of the *Chaconne*, the *Adagio* from the *Toccatto in C*, the *Siciliana* of the *C minor Violin Sonata* or the *Sinfonia* from the *Christmas Oratorio*. Nor is there any excuse for the addition of extraneous matter in the Pick-Mangiagalli arrangement of the *Prelude* from the violin *Partita in E*. On the other hand, a transcription of the *Passacaglia* for string quartet can never achieve a proper climax; and unsuitable bowing makes the transcription of the *Toccatto in F* that Coates has recorded laughable.

All this is prompted, of course, by Mr. Brewster's excellent article, with which I find it impossible not to agree. But there are two slight errors which should stand correction: 1. it is the glockenspiel, not the xylophone, that Schönberg uses (at least in the record); 2. Bach's piano concerto transcriptions are always a whole tone lower than their originals, not a half tone.

Sincerely,

Gerald S. Henry.

N. Y. C., July 12, 1937.

Page 130

## ARIOSTI CANTATA

To the Editor of The American Music Lover:

I do not know when I have heard anything to surpass for sheer delight the Ariosti Cantata and your radiant Lucille Dresskell. It seems to me that the "first pressing" of this Friends of Recorded Music disc means something, for the brilliant clarity must in part be due to an unworn matrix. It is surely seldom to be met with in ordinary commercial pressings.

Sincerely yours,

John Melville Howard.

Evanston, Ill.  
July 6, 1937.

## ON INSURING RECORDS

To the Editor of The American Music Lover:

There is one question I should very much like to have you take up with your subscribers, through the pages of your magazine; the matter of securing insurance for record collections. Surely a great many of them must have considered or tried to secure some such protection. With what degree of success have their efforts been rewarded?

It seems to me that there must be some reliable method of insuring such a valuable investment as is represented in any record collection, especially where the total number of discs runs into the hundreds or thousands, or where rare or out-of-print releases are concerned. Nevertheless, the conversations I have had to date with the representatives of several large insurance companies have been uniformly discouraging. The general attitude still seems to be that the phonograph is an out-of-date instrument, that the number of record collectors is so small as to be unworthy of consideration, and that in the circumstances the risk would be too great to consider. The insurance companies all seem willing enough to insure my collection for any amount I desire; but I have yet to find one which will assure me of receiving reimbursement for even twenty percent of the insured valuation in case of loss.

Is there any company which recognizes that the phonograph is still a living institution and that the number and importance of record collectors are constantly growing? What degree of coverage may I obtain, and at what cost? These are the questions for which I seek an answer, and I shall deeply appreciate your aid in enabling me to communicate with other collectors who have this information.

In conclusion, I wish to state my appreciation of the multiple services The American Music Lover is performing. May the efforts of you and your associates continue to receive the recognition which they deserve!

Yours very truly,

Lawton B. Kline.

Reno, Nevada.  
July 22, 1937.



# Overtones

## PATHE'S ORGAN ANTHOLOGY AND SISTINE CHOIR RECORDINGS

PATHE in Paris have contributed the outstanding organ recordings to date. Their album release, twelve 12-inch discs, *Three Centuries of Organ Music* is a contribution of inestimable value. The idea of this set, conceived by M. Norbert Dufourcq, has been carried out with care and devotion. A thirty-two page booklet, written by M. Dufourcq, accompanies the recordings, and sets forth (in French, of course) the development of organ music during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, the musical period covered in the recordings.

Sixteen composers are represented. They are Landino, Gabrieli, de Cabezón, Palestrina, de Santa-Maria, Frescobaldi, Froberger, Hanff, Buxtehude, Pachelbel, Purcell, Couperin, Marchand, de Grigny, Clerambault, J. S. Bach, and Daquin. Two compositions of Pachelbel, five of Bach, including his *Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C major*, and one composition of each of the others, is included in the set.

M. Dufourcq has chosen four highly regarded European organists to play these various compositions for recording: Joseph Bonnet and André Maréchal of Paris, Friedrich Mihatsch of Vienna, and Charles Hens of Brussels. All selections were performed on the Gonzales organ of Mme. Henry Gouin of Paris, and the results obtained are excellent in every way. This organ, said to be not very large, seems ideally suited to recording. And apparently its setting is as free from extraneous acoustical sound as its tone is from air-pressure hiss, two things which have marred the enjoyment of various organ recordings previously issued here.

Because of the excellence of this anthology of organ music, it is to be hoped that Columbia, who have already re-released some of the Pathé recordings, by arrangement, will be able to make arrangements to re-release these also.

\* \* \* \*

A series of 59 choral records made by the Sistine Chapel Choir and several of its solo-

ists in the Basilica of St. Peter's, Rome, presents many new items never before recorded, and several highly important items which needed to be re-recorded since existent versions were not entirely satisfactory.

Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Josquin des Pres and Victoria are liberally represented in this long list.

Among the recordings of Palestrina are:

- Missa di Papae Marcelli* (discs 36-30)
- Tenebrae factae sunt*, and *Super flumina Babylonis* (disc No. 1)
- Laudate pueri Dominum*, coupled with *Caligaverunt* (Victoria) (disc No. 2)
- O quantus Luctus*, coupled with *Ecce sic benedicetur* (Refice) (disc No. 3)
- Improperium*, coupled with *O vos omnes* (Victoria) (disc No. 8)
- Tribulationes* (I), and *Peccavimus* (II) (disc No. 11)
- Bonum est*, coupled with *Ecce Panis* (Taverni) (disc No. 13)
- Adoramus te*, coupled with *Ave Maria* (Victoria) (disc No. 16)
- Alleluia! Tulerunt Dominum meum*, and *Laudate Dominum* (disc No. 31)
- Introduxit me*, coupled with *O Domine Jesu* (Victoria) (disc No. 38)
- Exultate Deo*, and *Tota pulchra es amica mea* (disc No. 41)
- Vox dilecti mei*, coupled with *Ave Spes nostra* (Somma) (disc No. 44)
- Exaltabo te*, coupled with *Velociter exaudime* (Orlando di Lasso) (disc No. 54)

Among the recordings of Orlando di Lasso not already mentioned are:

- Tristis est*, coupled with *Pater noster* (Somma) (disc No. 9) and *Justorum animae*, coupled with *Sacerdos in aeternum* (Cappocci) (disc No. 23).

Of further interest are the following:

- Ave Maria* (I and II) (Josquin des Pres) (disc No. 48)
- Animam meam* (Victoria), coupled with *Estote Fortes in Belo* (Marenzio) (disc No. 40)

*Hymn to St. Peter* (Pietro Raimondi) (disc No. 5)

*Exultate justi in Domino* (Viadana), coupled with *Ave Maria* (Somma) (disc No. 14)

*Ad te levavi* (Cherubini), coupled with *O Jesu mi dolcissime* (Calzaveri) (disc 42)

*O Felix anima* (Carissimi, coupled with *Ave Verum* (Moriconi) (disc No. 43).

Most of the balance of the recordings are works by more modern composers. There are several of the selections duplicated with different couplings.

\* \* \* \*

French HMV have issued an album of works by Monteverdi, recorded under the direction of Nadia Boulanger. The album includes the following selections:

*Hor ch'el ciel e la terra, Lasciatemi morire, Zefiro torna, Ardo, Ohimè dove il mio ben, Chiome d'oro, Il Ballo delle Ingrate, Amor, and Ecco mormorar l'onde.*

\* \* \* \*

Serge Prokofieff has recently made for French HMV four discs containing the following piano compositions of his own:

*Visions Fugitives*, Opus 22; *Suggestion Diabolique*, Opus 4; *Deuxième Conte de la vieille Grandmère*, Opus 31, and *Sonatine Pastorale*, Opus 59; *Troisième Conte de la vieille Grandmère, Deuxième Gavotte*, Opus 25; *Etude*, Opus 52, and *Paysage*, Opus 58; *Andante*, Opus 29, and *Troisième Gavotte*, Opus 32.

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## RECORD COLLECTORS' CORNER

By JULIAN MORTON MOSES

A LONG standing request has been one for an article on ALESSANDRO BONCI. That it was not satisfied sooner was due, more than anything else, to the belief that all had been said of him that could and should be said with the least claim for truth. Yet, a more recent letter makes me pause to reconsider the case and to offer a few comments in reply to its writer's assertion, an old and commonplace one, namely that Bonci was vastly the inferior of Caruso.

Odious though comparisons be, the linking of these two names has been going on since the time they made their debuts here, only a few years apart. Without repeating the details of the inflated press controversy which might be better learned from any of a hundred contemporary sources, I should like to ask the counter-question that was posed at the very start: "Inferior in what?" If one replied *Pagliacci* or *Aida*, the answer was yes, but if the specifications mentioned were *Faust* or *Rigoletto*, then the dispute began in earnest.

It is not my plan to provoke another *L'Affaire De Lucia* (though if it takes the form of correspondence, we shall welcome it. In settling the problem in your own mind, remember the following:

1. Bonci was an exceptionally good concert singer (hear his *O del mio dolce ardor* or his *Vieni Amor Mio* with Leoncavallo at the piano).

2. Bonci had perfect breath control (his "Serenata" from *Il Barbiere* is the smoothest and most artistic version as to style, while his "Ah non mi ridestar" from *Werther* ends with a phrase sustained through an almost unbelievable length).

3. Bonci can be understood in every word and herein lies the secret of his or anybody's vocal placement.

All the records referred to above are Fonotipias with piano accompaniment. By the time we get to the 92,000 Fonotipias with orchestras, there is a marked difference which is all the more accentuated in his Columbia records of 1912 (yet his *La Bohème* aria on Columbia 36458 is the best rendition he gave of it and makes an admirable coupling with the "Una furtiva lagrima" from *L'Elisir D'Amore* on No. A5443, the double-face pressing issued simultaneously). Outside of the *Faust* cylinder No. 29003, his Edison records are much below his usual standard.

Remembering that breath control does not mean tone control and that no one since De Lucia had that master's powers of dynamic gradation, listen to almost any of Bonci's records, the earlier the better, breath with him and see, if by thus breathing with him (a trick to be followed with any singer), you do not more readily arrive at an appreciation of what is often loosely called *bel canto*.

GOLDMARK: *Die Königin von Saba, Magische Töne*; and BOIELDIEU: *Die Weisse Dame, Komm, O holde Dame*; sung by Leo Slezak, with orchestra, International Record Collectors' Club, 318 Reservoir Ave., Bridgeport, Conn., 10-inch disc, No. 99 (autographed), price \$1.75.

We take what we hope is pardonable pride in having discovered the excellence of the *Weisse Dame* selection several years ago and thus, in a most circuitous way, accounting for its present release. It needs to be heard to be appreciated and should be by everyone, especially admirers of the Tauber style. On the reverse side, Slezak is more of his usual self.

\* \* \* \*

No new releases have arrived from the Historic Record Society but its pressings of the Gerville-Reache and the Amato and Martin couplings, which made their appearance this week, more than satisfy our high expectations. Apparently it will be many, many years before all the deserving matrices are exhausted. In fact, the partisans of this or that singer are highly impatient in behalf of their favorites. Any suggestions you have as to re-pressings of famous records of the past will be received by us with great interest. Especially do we seek your opinion on the matter of re-recording where masters are no longer in existence.

# Record Notes and Reviews

Reviewers in This Issue: A. P. De Weese, Henry S. Gerstle, Philip Miller,  
and Peter Hugh Reed

## ORCHESTRA

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Romeo and Juliet* — Overture (5 sides); and SIBELIUS: *Maiden with the Roses* (from the suite *Swan-white*, Op. 54); played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, direction of Serge Koussevitzky. Victor set M-347, price \$6.50.

HERE at last is the much needed modern recording of the *Romeo and Juliet Overture*. How Victor missed the opportunity of timing such a release with the immensely popular film version of Shakespeare's tragedy must ever remain a mystery, especially as so much of the Tchaikowsky music was utilized in the background of the picture. And quite aside from these considerations, the popularity of the work itself should have been sufficient to bring about a worthy recording long ago. The Stokowski set has for some years now been outdated as a recording, and there are some among us to whom the performance never seemed a satisfactory one. Stokowski's tendency, it seems to me, is to overstress the lush and sentimental quality of Tchaikowsky's music — which is just what such music cannot stand. The Columbia Mengelberg recording was far more to my taste, because it was above all things honest and forceful. In its day, too, it was an outstanding recording, and I have no doubt that it can still hold its own, though it is some time since I have heard it. However that may be, it is safe to say that this Koussevitzky version is mechanically superior, and that the performance is quite as vital and effective. I like the real sense of excitement in the agitated portions, and the lack of morbidity in the defiant proclamation of the dangerously sweet love theme. After all these lovers were young people, and young people who were willing to stake all on their love.

The recording, like that of most of the new Sibelius' orchestral suite *Svanevit*, or *Swan-*

*white*, which was arranged from the incidental music from August Strindberg's fairy play, produced in 1908. Strindberg has confessed his original intention of writing his own music for the production, but that he gave up the idea when the name of Sibelius was suggested. The selection given here is a delicate and pleasing trifle, surely not of the great Sibelius, but valuable for the light it throws on his work as a whole.

The recording, like that of most of the new Boston series, is large and brilliant. Though this may sound like nonsense, there is a certain hollowness in its sonority which is attributable to the acoustic properties of the hall (probably empty) in which the orchestra was recorded. There is apt to be a reverberation at the ends of the record sides.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

CHOPIN: *The Enchanted Night* (*La Nuit ensorcelée*) (Arr. by Aubert and Vuillermoz); played by Orchestre Symphonique, direction of Louis Aubert. Two Columbia discs, Nos. 68984D-85D, price \$3.00.

OF the making of Chopin ballets there is no end, and the recording companies, it seems, are prompt to follow up each new manifestation of the activity. I take *La Nuit ensorcelée* to be a more or less recent arrangement, since a search through various books on the ballet, as well as works on Chopin, Aubert and Vuillermoz has not revealed so much as a mention of the name. The orchestration is very much in the tradition, and the two discs can safely be ordered unheard by anyone to whom this sort of thing appeals.

Personally, I feel that no music is less in need of interpretation, visual or otherwise, than that of the melancholy Pole. Furthermore, though it orchestrates effectively, there is no denying that the whole complexion of his music is changed in the process. For

Chopin, the most pianistic of composers, is only a memory in such an arrangement as this. All of which, I realize, is heresy to the Balletomane, and will interest only those who agree with me.

Speaking more practically, the recording as such is quite satisfactory, though perhaps a trifle on the thin side in the *E major Etude* which opens the suite. In the heavier and less sustained selections which follow I find little to criticize.

—P. M.

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THOMAS: *Mignon* — *Overture*; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc. No. 12038, price \$1.50.

ONE thing is being made increasingly clear by the Boston "Pops" series of light classics, and that is the amazing number of these works which have not been recorded since electrical reproduction came of age. There are certainly plenty of *Mignon Overtures* listed in the various catalogues, and for all I know some of them may sound quite adequate still, but the fact remains that none of them is particularly recent, and it is safe to say that none is nearly so brilliantly recorded as this. Mr. Fiedler's performance, as always, is a sane and satisfactory one, lacking, perhaps, the Beecham flair for reviving the old forgotten original thrill in too-familiar music, yet so full-blooded and honest that it is easy for the most jaded of us to find some enjoyment in it. The recording is spacious and clear to a degree.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \* \*

VERDI: *Giovanna d'Arco* — *Overture*; played by the Milan Symphony Orchestra, direction of Cav. Lorenzo Molajoli. Columbia disc. No. \*8983-D, price \$1.50.

NOW that the tumult (if not the shouting) has died, and the figure of the great Verdi — the composer of *Otello* and *Falstaff* — looms increasingly large across the years, the time has come for a calm consideration of his lesser known works as well as those which are so very familiar to us.

*Giovanna d'Arco* is one of the forgotten operas of the composer's early period, and the undeniable inferiority of much of its music is accounted for not only by Verdi's

youth, but also by the fact that he took only three months to produce it. Solera's libretto, too, which is based upon Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, is full of absurdities, and, according to Francis Toye, only a shade more preposterous than the drama which inspired it. First produced at La Scala on February 15, 1845, the opera never was a success, though it was revived at Palermo under the title of *Orietta di Lebo*, having undergone extensive alterations to satisfy the police.

Whatever the quality of the opera as a whole, the overture is an effective one in the good old Italian style. In it Verdi does not yet achieve the full measure of his individuality, and the influence of his immediate predecessors is both obvious and amusing. There is a real Rossini *crescendo* at the beginning of the second side of the record, and a march tune quite worthy of Bellini.

The performance of the Milan Symphony Orchestra under the baton of the tireless Cav. Molajoli is both a finished and a spirited one. The recording could scarcely be better. A word of praise should also be given to Columbia for the new departure in giving the date of the work on the label.

—P. M.

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WEBER: *Overture to Der Freischütz*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia disc No. 68986D, price \$1.50.

WEBER: *Overture to Euryanthe*; played by the B. B. C. Orchestra, direction of Sir Adrian Boult. Victor disc No. 12037, price \$1.50.

WEBER'S overtures in their day were prophetic of a new art of instrumentation. They were programmatic too, for the thematic material of the opera which they prefaced was employed to prepare the listener for the emotional implications of the drama. Thus the horn quartet, which opens the *Freischütz Overture*, is symbolic of faith and prayer; the cello solo which follows over a string tremolo is a premonition of evil. The plot concerns itself with the deliverance of the hero from the snares of the evil one by the love and faith of his betrothed. The contrasts in the overture are easily marked. In the end, of course, all is triumphant song, for good has conquered over evil.

Long familiarity with Weber's overtures in the concert hall has established their worth as music apart from any program or stage picture. Their romantic moods need no identification for the enjoyment of their music, for they are full of poetry and energy, their instrumentation is cleverly planned, and their tonal colors are sufficient in themselves to one who likes orchestral music for itself, not for any program it might represent.

Unlike the *Freischütz Overture*, the *Eury-anthe* opens and closes in a triumphant vein. There is in the middle of this overture a short passage of great beauty (to be heard at the end of the first side of the present recording), a *largo* depicting a scene at a tomb in the opera.

There are several recordings of both these overtures extant. Of those previously issued the best were unquestionably the ones made by Mengelberg. Recently, we reviewed a newer version of the *Freischütz Overture*, made by Furtwängler. In our estimation, it was a fine reading. But so too is Beecham's, and if it takes precedence over Furtwängler's in our estimation, it is largely because it is better recorded and the record surface is quieter. Beecham's performance, moreover, is more pointed than Furtwängler's and less sentimental. I like the strength he finds in his music, and his spacing too is preferable. Furtwängler, it will be recalled, took three sides, to Beecham's two, to play the work. At the same time, I miss the horns in the Berlin Philharmonic, for they were richer in tonal quality.

Boult does not point his performances as does Beecham, nor does he get the most out of the music. Mengelberg's reading of *Eury-anthe* is still the best. But Boult is an admirable musician with a particularly fine orchestra, and his recording is more brilliant and revealing where the instrumentation is concerned.

—P. H. R.

## CONCERTOS

BACH: *Concerto No. 1, in A minor*; played by Yehudi Menuhin, violin, with Paris Symphony Orchestra, direction of Georges Enesco. Two Victor discs, Nos. 14370-71, price \$4.00.

YEHUDI MENUHIN continues his progress through the violin works of Bach with

the regularity of a recording society, though fortunately with none of the society restrictions. With this set he completes the concertos, and all of the solo sonatas and partitas are either available or announced as in preparation. Logically, his next step should be to undertake the violin and clavier sonatas — and do we dare to hope that he will do them with a harpsichord?

Not counting the Decca recording of Bach's own clavier version in *G minor* of this concerto, there are now three performances from which to choose — and two of these are in the domestic catalogues. Of the French Polydor version by Yvonn Astruc I cannot speak, but the Columbia Huberman and the Victor Menuhin set make an interesting comparison, especially since we are afforded the same choice of artists in selecting a recording of the *E major concerto*.

The *A minor Concerto* is less ingratiating than its *E major* companion. This, of course, leaves plenty of room for a work of individual beauty and musical value, which the *A minor* undoubtedly is. But where the *E major* is irresistible, the *A minor* is a bit austere and detached. In none of its movements does it quite equal the sheer vitality of the other. And this fact makes a choice between the competing recordings of the *A minor* all the more difficult. For in the smoother *E major*, I find the more polished playing of Menuhin decidedly to be preferred, but here the style of Huberman seems better adjusted to the humor of the music than it was in the *E major*. So while, in the end, I should probably choose Menuhin, it would not be without some deliberation. Menuhin's accompanying orchestra, directed by Enesco, is better attuned to the chamber proportions of the work than that which plays with Huberman, though this seems less important here than in the *E major Concerto*. But though this point may seem small, it does not seem to throw the balance in favor of Menuhin.

The statement, in the advance publicity issued by Victor on this recording, that "until the ascendancy of the Menuhin star Bach was not the favorite of either the great concert violinists or the public" is so preposterous that it would be amusing if it were not for its wholly unfair and damaging implications.

—P. M.



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# **VICTOR RECORDS**

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HANDEL (Arr. Casadesus): *Concerto in B minor (viola and orchestra)*; played by William Primrose and Chamber Orchestra, direction of Walter Goehr. Columbia set 295, price \$4.50.

EVER since Mr. Kreisler's confession, suspicion has attached itself to every modern edition of an unknown or "newly-discovered" manuscript by one or another of the great masters of the past. And the name of Henri Casadesus has been widely discussed because of the large number of works he has given to the world in this way. The booklet which accompanies the present set, with admirable tact and discretion allows us to think anything we choose about the authenticity of this alleged work of Handel. M. Casadesus, we are told in effect, has disclosed no information in regard to the whereabouts of the manuscript, the scoring of the original, to what extent he has adapted the *Concerto* to his own ideas, or even for what solo instrument the music was composed. We can draw our own conclusions.

It would be easier to give an appraisal of the value of the music if there were not this ever present doubt to prejudice the hearer. If it were presented as a concerto in the style of Handel by Casadesus, we would probably pronounce the work a masterpiece of stylistic assimilation. In any case the music has vitality and considerable beauty. The first movement, with its thematic affinity with the famous Bach *Concerto for Two Violins*, is invigorating and well worked out. The second is a broad and lovely, if somewhat impersonal *andante*, and the Finale is a *Gigue* pointing ahead to the light-hearted *Rondeaux* of Mozart. This last is the least successful movement of the three, for indeed, it takes a Mozart to handle this sort of thing with complete success.

No small measure of the effect of the *Concerto* must be credited to the splendid playing of William Primrose, who used to be a member of the London String Quartet, but forsook chamber music to become a viola virtuoso — in which field he has few rivals. This instrument is one of the most difficult to master, and to go beyond the externals and play with any degree of dash and ease requires a musician of the first water. Mr. Primrose has a warm and rich tone, and his playing throughout, in the more involved passage work as well as in the sustained flow of the *andante*, is smooth and effortless.

The chamber orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr is in every way adequate, and the performance has been faithfully caught by the sound engineers.

—P. M.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

BACH: *Suite in A Major* (for violin and harpsichord); and *Fugue in G minor* (for violin and figured bass); played by Stefan Frenkel, violin, and Ernst Victor Wolff, harpsichord. Musicraft Album No. 3, price \$6.50.

MUSICOLOGISTS differ on the authenticity of this suite attributed to Bach. The evidence against the work, it seems, is internal — there are touches and conceptions here and there in the seven movements which are, to say the least, unusual in the great Johann Sebastian. And though those who claim that it is genuine (Martin Bernstein, for one, who wrote the Musicraft leaflet) place the work at some time previous to the Cöthen period, some listeners hear in it stylistic traits which belong rather to the Bach sons than to their father. On one point, however, all are agreed: the suite is worthy of a place in the repertoire of chamber music. To be sure it has its weaker moments — for instance the *Sarabande*, which, says Mr. Bernstein, "tends to lose its sense of direction in figuration," and the *Minuet* with its curiously un-Bachlike repeated notes and its rather frequent unisons. Too, the work in its entirety may be a bit long. But whatever its shortcomings, it was worth doing.

The *Fugue in G minor* is especially interesting as performed here because the harpsichord part is improvised from the figured bass by Dr. Wolff in the manner of Bach's day. Musicians who are equal to this task today are few indeed. The music has breadth and dignity, and the *Fugue* makes a good filler with this particular suite.

As a recording of balance between two instruments this set might be taken as a model by the larger companies. Never once in the eight record sides do we have the effect of a violin solo with "accompaniment," but always the two instruments (or more properly three voices, since the harpsichord part is written throughout in two continuous lines) playing together on equal terms. My one serious criticism of the performance is

a certain lack of variety, which is probably as much the fault of one musician as of the other. There is remarkably little change in Wolff's registration in the course of the suite, and Frenkel's playing is rather on the straightaway. I find the violin tone more pleasant here than in the Purcell recording, also reviewed this month, but the artist seems to avoid deliberately all suggestion of sensuality. All of which may account, as much as the weakness of some of the movements, for the impression of length I had at the end of the suite.

—P. M.

\* \* \*  
**BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in C major*, Opus 102, No. 1 (cello and piano); played by Pablo Casals and Mieczysław Horszowski. Two Victor discs, Nos. 14366-67, price \$4.00.**

**R**ESOLUTENESS and energy are evidenced in the opening movement of this sonata. There is grave beauty in the slow introduction, and superbly voiced power and force in the *allegro* that follows. This is highly interesting and unusual music, music whose formal exterior "conceals an imaginative impulse which reaches out boldly beyond the limits of conventional expression." Beethoven has written equally forcefully for both instruments; the music flows in the style of an intimate dialogue.

This sonata has been described as bearing a striking psychological similarity to the *A major Piano Sonata*, Opus 101, which Beethoven began at the same time but failed to complete until the year following. The cello sonata requires many hearings, however, to establish full appreciative enjoyment, for it is not as immediately appealing as the piano work.

Some writers contend that this sonata is divided into two movements, each with a slow introduction, while others admit the inner section as a short slow movement. There can be no doubt that Beethoven intended the short inner *adagio* as a slow movement. It is an exquisite fragment, full of a consolatory beauty. The last movement is in a brighter vein; there is gaiety here, curiously restricted however. The movement does not get under way immediately, for the composer starts and pauses several times before he establishes his *allegro vivace*.

The emotional scope of this sonata is wide; therefore it requires the finest type of artistry to do it justice. It is good to be able

to say that Casals and his partner realize its emotional scope fully and that they surmount its technical difficulties with impeccable artistry. Mr. Horszowski, new to records, is a valiant partner for Casals, and a pianist of exceptional artistic attainments. Future recordings from Casals and Horszowski will be awaited with eager interest. Incidentally, he is Casals' partner in the recording of Brahms' Opus 99 cello sonata, which we mentioned last month as having been recently recorded.

The reproduction here is excellent, with a fine balance between the two instruments, the sort of balance that should have been realized as a matter of fact in the Mozart violin sonata recordings reviewed in July. The division of the sonata in recording is apt to sustain the two-movement thought, since the first movement takes the entire first disc and the short *adagio* and finale occupies the second.

Despite the importance of this work, we cannot agree with the sponsors' statement in their advance publicity that this "is the first major work ever recorded by Casals." Have they forgotten his recording of the even greater *Cello Sonata*, Opus 69, which they issued in their album set M-134?

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*  
**BEETHOVEN: *String Quartet in A major*, Opus 18, No. 5; played by the Lener String Quartet. Columbia set No. 301, three discs, price \$5.00.**

**S**INCE this recording supplies the missing link in the set of Beethoven's first string quartets, we have compiled an article on the series, printed elsewhere in this issue.

To refer to this work as a "trifling achievement" seems to us absurd. Each quartet of Opus 18 contributes something towards the study of the mature Beethoven, and this one, despite its lack of depth, owns a last movement which marks the firmness of the growing Titan. The first movement has been termed Mozartean in its simple grace, but this adjective seems to us applicable to the spirit more than the essence of this music. The unity of the instrumental writing here, and at the same time the individualized treatment of each instrument, is unmistakably Beethovenian. Despite the limpity of the music, it does not have the elegance of Mozart, its grace is less refined, more bucolic.

The same may be said of the minuet which follows.

Although the *andante* has been called the best and most personal of the four movements, it is to us the weakest part of the quartet. Granted that it displays Beethoven's skill in preserving and exploiting the individuality of his instruments; it still fails to attest any greatness for us. The theme is not especially impressive, and its treatment in the variation form does not sustain interest.

The Leners play this work very well indeed. Their refinement of style, less happily exploited in the *C minor Quartet*, fits the mood and character of this music. Perhaps Lener's violin could have been more advantageously coordinated with the other instruments upon occasion, but his playing of the long tendril-like passages, particularly in the first movement, is beautifully realized. The recording is wholly admirable.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

BEETHOVEN: *Trio in C minor*, Opus 1, No. 3 (7 sides); and *Little Trio in B flat major* (1 side); played by the American Art Trio. Musicraft album No. 2, four discs, price \$6.00.

IN the trios which make up his opus 1, Beethoven at the age of 25 showed his first real ability as a chamber music composer. In these works he not only progressed beyond the trios of Mozart and Haydn, but emerged as a composer with strongly individual feelings. "These three pieces are the first which lift him above mediocrity," says Bekker in his book on the composer.

The *C minor Trio*, the third of Beethoven's impressive Opus 1, has long been considered the most effective of the three. It is not only the most effective, however, but the most mature, and the one that has the greatest appeal. We have long admired the work, and been of the opinion that it should be recorded. In line with this, plans were made to record it for the Friends of Recorded Music.

The *C minor Trio* is divided into four movements, the first and fourth of which are the best.

The influence of Haydn can be traced through the three trios that comprise Opus 1. As a matter of fact Beethoven was a pupil of

his only a short time before he wrote them. One can understand today Haydn's counsel to the young composer regarding the publication of the trios, because we are familiar with Beethoven's mature works. Haydn was complimentary about the first two, but the third he advised his pupil not to publish. The boldness of its first movement, the troubled emotions of the minuet, sounded a new note in music which Haydn probably could not appreciate. It is hardly likely, however, that he was jealous of the success of the trios with the public, as Beethoven believed.

The performance of the American Art Trio (Milton Kaye, piano; Max Hollaender, violin; Sterling Hunkins, cello) is a well coordinated one, distinguished in our estimation by Mr. Kaye's ingratiating pianism; and the recording realizes an excellent balance. The quality of the piano is unusually good.

The division of the movements is: first and second movements, one disc each; minuet, half of the third disc; and finale, second half of the third disc and half of the last.

The *Little Trio in B flat*, which occupies the last half of the fourth disc, is a naive work, simple yet compact in structure. Written in 1812 for the young daughter of some friends "to encourage her in piano playing," it bears no opus number. The players as well as the recording do justice to this music.

Excessive surface noise with steel on these records prompts us to recommend non-metallic needles.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

MOZART: *String Quartet in F major*, K. 590, played by the Budapest String Quartet. Victor set M-348, three discs, price \$6.50.

MOZART was an ill man when he wrote this work, and his wife Constance was also ailing. Under the constraint of poverty and a king's mandate, this quartet, like its two predecessors, was written. Is it a wonder that this work fails to reveal the composer intimately under these circumstances? But Mozart was not without inspiration even in trying times, and, if the muse of music was slow to respond, she did not fail him completely in this work. For the *F major Quartet* grows in stature as it progresses, and its *Menuetto* and finale are movements of distinction. The absence of inspiration in the *andante* can be accredited to the fact that the composer's heart was not in his job.

We outlined the history of this quartet last month in our review of the performance of the Stradivarius Quartet. We pointed out then that the work abounds in dialogues between the various instruments and more particularly between the first violin and cello; and we lamented at that time the reticence in the cellist's performance. There is more graciousness here in the playing, more tact and point in the handling of the parts, and, at the same time, there is perfect unity. The Budapest String Quartet even succeed in making the dull second movement seem attractive. And their superb playing of the perpetual mobile-like finale sets a standard it will be hard to surpass.

The recording here is excellent in every way, quite the best we have had of the Budapest Quartet to date. The work is equitably divided — first and second movements occupying a whole disc each, and the third and fourth movements a single side each. Repeats observed are those of the exposition only in the first and second movements, and all those indicated in the *Menuetto*.

—P. H. R.

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**PURCELL:** *Sonata in G minor, for violin and figured bass*; played by Stefan Frenkel, violin; Sterling Hunkins, cello; Ernst Victor Wolff, harpsichord. Musicraft disc, No. 1023, price \$1.50.

**MUSICRAFT** now turns its attention to the greatest of English composers, presenting a unique work, the single sonata of Purcell, as Dr. Hans David points out in the accompanying leaflet, with less than three obbligato parts. This work is not to be confused with the two celebrated sets of sonatas, the first of which Purcell published in 1683, and the second of which was brought out by his widow after the composer's death. For a description of this noble music I can do no better than refer the reader to Dr. David's introduction, which may be had from any dealer who handles the record.

As for the performance, there will be considerable difference of opinion among the hearers of the disc. Mr. Frenkel belongs to that rough and ready school of violinists who seem generally to specialize in the music of olden times. His tone as it is reproduced on this record is not notable for suavity or fin-  
ish. He phrases intelligently, however, and

## COLUMBIA

### — ISSUES —

#### Set No. 295

**HANDEL: CONCERTO IN B MINOR, For Viola and Chamber Orchestra.** (Arr. Casadesus). Played by William Primrose (Violist) and Chamber Orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr. In five parts on three 12" records.

(A First Recording)

#### Set No. 301

**BEETHOVEN: QUARTET No. 5, IN A MAJOR, OP. 18, NO. 5.** Played by the Lener String Quartet (Lener - Smilovits - Roth - Hartman). On three 12" records.

(A First Domestic Recording)

#### Set No. X-77

**BEETHOVEN: SONATA No. 14, IN C SHARP MINOR, OP. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight")**

**LISZT: CONCERT STUDY IN D FLAT MAJOR.**

Played by Egon Petri (Pianist). On two 12" records.

(A Brilliant new "Full Range" Recording)

#### Set No. X-76

**CHOPIN (arr. Aubert): THE ENCHANTED NIGHT ("La Nuit Ensercelee").** Played by Orchestre Symphonique conducted by Louis Aubert. On two 12" records.

(A First Recording)

#### 68986-D

**WEBER: DER FREISCHUTZ - OVERTURE.** (In two parts). Played by Sir Thomas Beecham and The London Philharmonic Orchestra.

#### 68983-D

**VERDI (1845): GIOVANNA D'ARCO — OVERTURE.** (In two parts). Played by The Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Cav. Lorenzo Molajoli.

(A First Recording)

#### 68987-D

**PADEREWSKI: MINUET IN G MAJOR, OP. 14, NO. 1.**

**RUBINSTEIN: VALSE CAPRICE.**

Played by Ignaz Friedman (Pianist)



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obviously possesses a sense of style. I can say unreservedly that I like the effect of the cello doubling the bass of the harpsichord, which gives the music an organlike breadth and depth. Musicraft recording is steadily on the up-grade, though the surface of this disc is not yet comparable to the best of the bigger companies.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

RIETI: *Quartet in F major*; played by the Pro Arte Quartet. Two Victor discs, ten inch, Nos. 1821-1822, price \$3.00.

THE name of Vittorio Rieti appears for the first time on records with this brief string quartet. Born in 1898 at Alexandria, Egypt, Rieti studied with Frugatta and Respighi, and is considered one of the most promising younger talents in Italy. The *Quartet in F* was composed in 1926, and has been played by various leading quartets. The first movement is whimsical and pleasantly melodious, making rather more than the usual demands on the team work of the performers. The slow movement is a *Notturmo*, in three sharply contrasting sections, the first extremely soft and ethereal as played on the muted strings, the second increasingly agitated, and the third a return to the first mood. The finale is a spirited movement with complicated rhythms.

I doubt if I have ever heard such a pianissimo from a recorded string quartet as that achieved in the second movement. Here the skill of the Pro Artes is shown to its very best advantage, though they maintain a high standard throughout the work. They and the sponsoring company are to be thanked for their choice of unusual material as well as their extraordinary ability in presenting it.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

ROUSSEL: *Joueurs de flute — Pan*; *M. de Péjaudie*; *Tityre*; played by Marcel Moyse, flute, with piano accompaniments by Joseph Benvenuti. Columbia ten-inch disc, No. 1790-D, price \$1.00.

IF there exists an international guild of flute players, they should certainly award a medal to Marcel Moyse for the missionary work he has done and continues to do via the phonograph. And at the same time some award should be made to the Columbia Company in France for recording such interesting and unusual works for the instrument,

and in this country for the enterprise which prompts the domestic release of recordings of such obviously limited appeal.

*Joueurs de flute (Flute Players)* Opus 27, is a set of four short pieces dating from 1925, in which Roussel attempts to throw some light upon as many periods in the history of mankind. This design sounds imposingly large, though the music is nothing of the sort. The flute is not an instrument of great emotional power or variety of expression. And so quite simply the composer sets before us one little episode from each selected epoch. The ground plan of the little suite is rather upset in this recording by the omission of the third piece (*Krishna*) and the reversal of the chronology of the second and fourth.

The first flute player represented is *Pan*, to whom is devoted the longest and most elaborate of the pieces. It is interesting to note that this little pastorale is dedicated to M. Moyse. *M. de la Péjaudie*, who represents modern times, is the hero of a novel by Henri de Regnier, called *La Pécheresse*. His music is a short and not too serious serenade. *Tityre*, which takes us back to mythological times, represents the lover protesting the absence of the beloved.

M. Moyse again displays his pure and fluent tone and his musicianly approach. This is not great music, but, given such playing, it will be found pleasing by seekers after the unusual as well as lovers of the flute. The recording is altogether satisfactory.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

## KEYBOARD

BACH: *Das alte Jahr vergangen ist*, and *Christ lag in Todesbanden*; played on the Lyons Cathedral Organ by Edouard Commette. Columbia disc, 10 inch, No. 293-M, price 75c.

THIS disc has exceptional worth. Each side is a chorale prelude. The first is built on a New Year's hymn, a simple tune with bold harmonization that seems austere on the first few hearings. The second is based on one of the great old Easter chorales.

Commette uses plain registration for both pieces, and plays them quietly and sedately. A slightly stricter tempo in the melody of the



first chorale would have made it even more effective.

The Lyons Cathedral organ is obviously an outstanding instrument for recording purposes; here we get the pure organ tone that can not be supplanted by any combination of other instruments.

—A. P. D.

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BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in C sharp minor* ("Moonlight"), Opus 27, No. 2; and LISZT: *Concert Etude in D flat major*; played by Egon Petri. Columbia set X-77, two discs, price \$3.00.

THE so-called "Moonlight" Sonata is a true fantasy; even the last movement, with its rushing, headlong sequences, conveys the improvisatory quality of the work. For many, the melancholy opening *adagio* will always depict moonlight, no matter how many times they are informed that the sentimental tale told about the creation of this sonata, is without foundation.

It was Rellstab, the leading German critic of his time, who attached the "moonlight" sobriquet to the work. In a review he stated that the first movement made him feel that he was seeing moonlight upon the waves of the *Vierwaldstätter See*. Those who have this same feeling owe Rellstab their gratitude for pointing it out. The fact that the sonata is dedicated to Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, whom Beethoven hoped at one time to marry, bears no relation to its composition, since the composer dedicated it after its completion. However, we have no absolute assurance that he did not have her in mind when he wrote it, so those who wish to attach a romantic implication to the music may accept this one. What persons haunt a creator's mind, what scenes or incidents of everyday life affect its function, we may never know, unless the composer sees fit to tell us; and even then we cannot be assured of knowing all, for half of what went through his mind may recede from his memory afterwards. And, again, when the creative instinct manifests itself, not all men know all the impulses that urge them onward.

There are more than a dozen versions of the "Moonlight" Sonata on records, not counting this one and the new version made by Paderewski, which will undoubtedly be issued in the near future. The question of which is best is largely a matter of personal taste. Bachaus, Bauer, Friedman and Schna-

bel have contributed performances which have been widely praised. Kempff and the late, highly talented young Karol Szreter also recorded the work, and favorable comment was given their recordings too.

The best reproductions of piano are to be found in the Kempff recording and this one. (The Paderewski version has not been heard by us to date.) From the standpoint of reproduction, this recording is all around the best, for not only does the bass line emerge clear and richly sonorous, but the *sforzandi* chords are thrillingly realized. The gradations of tone are, on the whole, equitably reproduced, but there are cases where Petri's obvious contrasts between *forte* and *piano* are not absolutely veritable in the reproduction. Generally speaking, however, the man at the control board has been kind to Petri's reading. We hope that recordings will some day be realized without any manipulations of controls.

Petri's performance of this sonata is splendid in every way. As one listens to his enunciation of the music, the memory of all other performances is blotted out. Without sentimentalizing, he stresses the melody in the first movement. Petri's feeling for all music is based on its rhythmic flow and energy. In the lovely second movement, which Liszt once termed "a flower between two abysses," he plays with a seldom-heard, wholly admirable, rhythmic exactitude. He is a true virtuoso too, in the highest sense of the word; witness his electrifying performance of the last movement, which is taken at a speed few pianists would attempt. It is the energy of this music which impels Petri onward, he does not resort to *rubati* for the sake of establishing drama, as many do, but lets the tempest and the thrill of the music attest itself just as Beethoven inscribed it on paper.

In the Liszt *Concert Etude*, Petri again plays with rhythmic energy, realizing the virtuoso qualities of the composition with superb artistry. One almost forgets the banality of the music in his playing. This strange companion for Beethoven's sonata has been recorded several times before, but never more thrillingly.

—P. H. R.

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CHOPIN: *Polonaises*, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and *Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise*, Opus 22; played by Arthur Rubin-

stein. Victor set M-353, eight discs, price \$16.00.

**T**HE Polonaise is a dance of Polish origin in  $\frac{3}{4}$  and moderate tempo, with the accent on the second beat of the measure. "It was really a march, or processional dance," Huneker tells us, "grave, moderate, flowing and seldom stereotyped . . . at once the symbol of war and love, a vivid pageant of martial splendor, a weaving, cadenced, voluptuous dance . . ." It originated during the last half of the 16th century at the court of Henry of Anjou, and became in time a political dance, which upon occasion had words set to it.

Chopin loved his native Poland, and hated her oppressors. In his polonaises he has glorified his love of his country. We find in them a strength, a vehemence, a fierce passion and a savage energy which proclaim the masculinity of his soul. Although many composers have written polonaises, none, most critics concede, has ever surpassed Chopin's works in this genre.

In all, Chopin composed 15 polonaises. Of these, the first seven for solo piano are considered the finest. These are included in the present collection. The *Grande Polonaise* Opus 22, is an earlier work written for piano and orchestra, but more often performed today without the orchestral accompaniment.

One could write at length about the characteristics of these pieces, their subtleties, their thrills, their defiance, and their savage drama. There is more to say than the obvious, commercially stereotyped notes which accompany these recordings set forth. James Huneker, in his preface to Schirmer's edition of the polonaises, tells a story which might better have accompanied these recordings. (We are certain the publishers would have allowed its republication.) One wonders why even a reference to those inspirational notes was not made in the ones offered with the set. We recommend Huneker's notes to our readers.

Speaking of the notes to this set, and the publicity given it by its sponsors, one is amazed to read that "Arthur Rubinstein is one of the fabulous legion of great pianists who sprung up about the time of Chopin and Liszt and who have with a few exceptions disappeared from among us." Also, the statement that Rubinstein (born in 1886) is seventy-five years old today. Considering that

Chopin died in 1849, Rubinstein, according to the above statement, would have to be nearly a hundred to have "sprung up about the time of Chopin." We can imagine how appreciative Mr. Rubinstein will be over this publicity. The statement that he made a sensational tour of America last year is also a fallacious one, since this pianist has not played in this country for a dozen years, at least. These are not the first nor the only inaccurate statements emanating from the sponsors of this set. Others made in connection with different recordings issued this month are noted elsewhere.

Arthur Rubinstein is one of the foremost contemporary virtuosi of the keyboard. His playing is characterized by bigness, fervor, nuance and poise, and a profound feeling for the impulse of the music. The sentient qualities of these compositions are fully projected, but without sentimentalization, and the drama and fervor are given their just due, but without devitalizing *rubati*. One need only turn to his recording of Opus 53 to appreciate fully his regard for text, his unerring sense of drama based on the music's flow. The brilliance of the chordal inner section is superbly realized, and the *soito voce* and *crescendo* passages which follow are played unforgettably. Rubinstein feels and projects the poetry, the fire, the heroism, and the savagery of these compositions in a truly exalted manner.

The album contains the two *Polonaises* in *C sharp minor* and *E flat minor*, Opus 26; the *A major* and *C minor*, Opus 40; the *F sharp minor*, Opus 44; the *A flat major*, Opus 53; the *Fantaisie-Polonaise*, Opus 61; the *Andante Spianato* and *Grande Polonaise* in *E flat major*, Opus 22.

With the exception of the last polonaise, which is pompous and badly put together (the *Andante Spianato* is delicate and wistful), the album is representative of Chopin's genius at its greatest. Previous recordings of many of the *polonaises* are too numerous to list or review here; suffice it to say that Rubinstein, with the aid of the most realistic modern recording, contributes in all cases the best reproductions of any issued to date. The superb *F sharp minor Polonaise*, one of Chopin's greatest compositions, is recorded here for the first time.

The reproduction is full-bodied and opulent. Domestic Victor has never equalled the piano quality obtained in these records, as

a comparison of Lhevinne's performance of Opus 53 (Victor disc 1765) and the one here by Rubinstein will substantiate.

—P. H. R.

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GRANADOS: *La Playera* (No. 5 from *Danzas Espanolas*); and LEHMBERG: *El puerto*; played by George Copeland. Victor ten-inch disc, No. 1823, price \$1.50.

IN case it is not recognized, *La Playera*, is the familiar piece generally known simply as *Spanish Dance*, and usually played in transcription by violinists and cellists. Though this is not the first recording in its less familiar original form, it is the first to be made generally available in this country. Together with its rather undistinguished companion piece, the Granados dance forms a sort of belated pendant to Copeland's Spanish album. The name of Lehmborg is new to me, and I have been unable to learn more about him than that he is a Spaniard and that his full name is Emilio Lehmborg Ruiz.

Copeland plays the Granados in a rather stylized manner which I find less effective than the more classic conception of Casals. The playing of the Lehmborg seems quite suitable. The piano tone is quite good in this recording.

—P. M.

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MEDTNER: *Novelle in G major*, Opus 17, No. 1, and *Conte in B flat minor*, Opus 20, No. 1 (piano solos), played by Harry L. Anderson. Iragen disc No. 2R29-03, price \$1.50.

A PART from an insignificant trifle recorded several years ago by Moiseievitch, this is the gramophonic debut of Nicolai Medtner, hitherto undeservedly neglected on discs. It is to the enterprise of Mr. Albert J. Franck, sponsor of Iragen records, that we should offer thanks for this all-too-small contribution to worth-while contemporary music. The selections chosen are excellent examples of the composer's musical thinking in the smaller forms. (Incidentally, the labeling is misleading. It should read as given above, not *Trois Novelles*, Opus 17, No. 1 in *G major*, and *Deux Contes*, Opus 20, No. 1 in *B flat minor*.) These pieces, like the late piano pieces of Brahms, do not divulge their complete message upon first acquaintance, but repeated hearings offer us enhanced beauties. They are played with sympathetic in-

sight and fine musicianship by Harry L. Anderson, a young American pianist, whose performances of these pieces just miss greatness. No gramophonist alive to perdurable music can afford to overlook this gem of a disc.

—H. S. G.

\* \* \* \*

PURCELL: *Suite in D major*, and *Tocatta in A major* (for harpsichord); played by Ernst Victor Wolff. Gamut record No. 12.104, price \$1.50.

SCARLATTI: *Sonatas in G major* (Longo 486) and *F minor* (Longo 382) (for harpsichord); played by Ernst Victor Wolff. Gamut record No. 12.105, price \$1.50.

PURCELL'S little keyboard suites do not represent his genius as worthily as the sonatas or the fantasias. As predecessors of Bach's keyboard suites, however, they bear study. The present one, made up of old dance forms, an almand, a corant and a hornpipe, is a short but pleasant work.

The *Tocatta* is a more imposing piece — a brilliant virtuoso work, which is unquestionably exceedingly difficult to perform. Pur-

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cell's authorship of this composition has been questioned, since there is a manuscript of it in the British Museum signed by Michele Angelo Rossi. Curiously, it has also been attributed to Bach and was included for a number of years in the Bach-Gesellschaft edition as one of Bach's organ works.

The two sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti, the greatest harpsichordist of his time, are highly interesting compositions—like the other works under discussion, never before recorded. The *G major Sonata* is an animated gossipy piece of a virtuoso character, somewhat marred in performance by the noise of the shifting registrations.

The *F minor Sonata* is of a completely different character, emotionally restrained with a rare melodic poignancy. Here again the noise of the harpsichord's mechanism intrudes on the quiet beauty of the music, but does not necessarily spoil our enjoyment of it.

Ernst Victor Wolff plays these compositions with admirable musicianship. His sobriety and erudition are particularly well suited to the Purcell *Toccata* and to the restrained emotional character of the *F minor Sonata* of Scarlatti. Recording here is full and resonant, and record surfaces are relatively quiet.

—P. H. R.

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RUBINSTEIN: *Valse caprice*; and PADE-REWSKI: *Minuet in G major, Opus 14, No. 1*; played by Ignaz Friedman. Columbia disc, No. 68987-D, price \$1.50.

ANTON RUBINSTEIN owes it no less to his position as one of the elect among the pianists of all time than to the irony of fate that he seems destined to be remembered by his rather superficial compositions for his chosen instrument. He stands apart among famous disappointed musicians as the one who, though he considered himself the rival and superior of Wagner, was not accepted as a first-rate composer during his lifetime, nor has he been since. Today his operas are unknown to us, and there seems little likelihood of a revival of interest in them, but the searcher after neglected masterpieces will do well to examine the Rubinstein songs. It is in this field that the composer who, contrary to his own belief, was essentially a miniaturist, and whose workmanship was not

equal to the long flights he set himself, often struck a note of real and sincere beauty. Let me take this occasion to recommend both the solo songs and the vocal duets to the attention of the recorders.

But to come to the subject of this review. The facile *Valse-Caprice* is neither the best nor the least familiar of Rubinstein's piano works. Recorded at least twice before, it fills no gap save in the Columbia catalogue. The Friedman playing is all that we could desire, but I, for one, regret that it was not rather lavished on one of the *Barcarolles*.

If the story is true that Paderewski wrote his famous *Minuet* to demonstrate to a friend that a modern could write in the style of olden days, and that he represented it when he played it as an old work newly discovered, then we must conclude that the pianist's friend was a remarkably credulous gentleman. For the music is what we would expect from Paderewski far sooner than from Rameau or Couperin. In any case it is to the great pianist's credit that he did not persist in the hoax, but published the work as his own. Friedman's playing is here a little studied, giving the impression of care and calculation rather than of spontaneity. I seem to remember a greater jauntiness in Paderewski's own playing, and I am sure that the composer did not linger at the top of the cadenzas as does Friedman.

But criticism aside, this recording of two old favorites will certainly please anyone looking for them. The reproduction is above reproach.

—P. M.

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SCHUBERT: *Ave Maria*; and MAILLY: *Invocation*; played by Charles Courboin. Victor 14368, price \$2.00.

CONTINUING his recordings on the Philadelphia Wanamaker organ, Courboin gives us two selections that we could easily do without. The first is his own transcription of the *Ave Maria*, and this misses the feeling of the song. A comparison of this disc with Marian Anderson's record of last month will show the lack here of the necessary serenity and devotion. Courboin's laxity of rhythm in the melody annoys the hearer. Strong reeds, and later the *vox*, play the air over a soft accompaniment; the chimes in the second verse are no great musical addition.

Alphonse Mailly's virtuoso playing and his successful teaching of the organ at the Brussels Conservatoire won him more renown than his compositions. The *Invocation* is unpretentious and innocuous, but unfortunately it associates itself in our mind with that much over-worked song *Sylvia*.

With a wealth of fine organ music to choose from, Courboin could easily have picked better offerings. Technically, this record is a little better than Courboin's previous ones, but this organ cannot be called a successful recording instrument.

—A. P. D.

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SIBELIUS: *Romance in D flat*, Opus 24, No. 9; and GRIEG: *Nocturne*, Opus 54, No. 4 (piano solos); played by Andre Skalski. Iragen record No. 2R-29-04, price \$1.50.

SIBELIUS has never been a great contributor to piano music. In fact, in this field his works do not rank above the salon type of composition. This nocturne, drawn from the best of his piano works, is a sentimental and ingratiating piece, reminiscent of Chopin.

Grieg's *Nocturne*, originally one of six pieces (opus 54) composed for the piano, is best known in its orchestral arrangement as a part of the *Lyric Suite*, which includes four of the piano pieces of Opus 54. A piano recording of this has never been available in domestic catalogs, although one exists in the European lists of Odeon.

Mr. Skalski's performance of these two compositions is finely wrought, and his singing tone is particularly appropriate to the melodic lines of the music. The recording here is particularly good, although the frequency range is not of the highest; the tone of the piano, however, is realistic.

—P. H. R.

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## MISCELLANY

BACH: *Bourée* from (*violin Partita No. 1*) (arr. by Saint-Saëns); and *Bourée* (from *Cello Suite in C major*) (Arr. by H. Renié); played by Mildred Dilling, harp. Columbia disc, 10-inch, No. 17097-D, price \$1.00.

THE little disc enlarges the recorded repertoire of transcribed Bach, and at the same time that of the harp. The two *Bourées* here presented are perhaps the most familiar

that Bach wrote, so the music is no novelty. Furthermore, at least one of them is a regular item in every harpist's stock in trade, and bears the august name of Saint-Saëns as transcriber. The other, only less usual, has been arranged by Henriette Renié, one of the teachers of the present performer. On both sides of the record, the music seems well enough adapted to its medium, though the appeal will be largely to lovers of the instrument. Columbia has given us ample opportunity of becoming familiar with Miss Dilling's playing, and this disc is well up to her standard. As usual the recording is good.

—P. M.

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PONCE: *Petite valse* (Arr. Segovia); and *Mazurka*; played by Andres Segovia, guitar. Victor disc, 10-inch, price \$1.50.

WITH this disc Segovia makes his return to the domestic lists after a protracted absence. The music is not of towering importance, being, I take it, the work of the contemporary Mexican, Manuel Ponce, best known to us as the composer of the song *Estrellita*, rather than that of the sixteenth century Juan Ponce. I do not know whether or not the *Mazurka* is original guitar music, but it seems safe to say that the *Petite valse* is not, since the label attributes the arrangement to Segovia. Of the two the *Valse* is the more interesting, with its modal harmonies, suggestive of an earlier day in Spanish music. Both pieces, however, are distinguished chiefly by the artist's masterly playing. The recording is very good.

—P. M.

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STRAUSS: *An einsamer Quelle*, Op. 9, No. 2, and CLERAMBAULT: *Largo on G String* (Arr. Dandelot); played by Jascha Heifetz, violin, with piano accompaniments by Arpad Sandor. Victor disc, No. 14369, price \$2.00.

HEIFETZ once more leaves the beaten track and brings us two selections which will doubtless be new to most record buyers. Curiosity centers perhaps around the little Strauss piece, which is taken from a group of five *Stimmungsbilder* for piano solo (not, as the sponsors' publicity tells us, a song) bearing the early opus number 9. It is a rather exalted and flowing melody, which will appeal to music lovers of simple tastes, but which will be in some danger of wearing out its welcome with the more sophisticated. One



wonders how it can have been overlooked for so long. There is little in this music of the Strauss we know, but it will make a useful addition to the violinist's everyday repertoire.

More permanently satisfying is the broad and dignified Clerambault melody on the reverse. Just where editor Dandelot found this piece, or for what instrument it was composed, I do not know, but my guess would be that it belongs to the organ, the composer's instrument. Being purely and simply a tune, it is naturally very effective on the violin, and we can hardly begrudge its presence in this form.

The famous Heifetz tone, with and without mute, may be studied on this record. The accompaniments of Arpad Sandor are well played, though the balance is a little too much in favor of Mr. Heifetz.

—P. M.

## VOICE

ALFVEN: *Op. 28, Jag langtar dig; Skogen soffer*; sung by Helen Snow, soprano; and SCHUBERT: *Der Wanderer*; sung by Joseph Posner, baritone. Piano accompaniments by Andre Skalski. Iragen disc, No. 2R-29-06. Price \$1.50.

THE name of Hugo Alfven is more familiar in this country than his music. It is, therefore, a pleasure to report that this first record to represent him as a song composer is a most decided success. Of the particular meaning of the songs I must confess ignorance, since I have not been able to locate the music, and am not familiar with the Swedish language. However, I imagine that the translations of the titles as given on the label convey as much as we really need to know. The first song, *I Long for You*, is the less important of the two, being not much more, apparently, than an effective encore song. But the second, *The Forest Sleeps*, sets and sustains a real and very beautiful mood. This song is indeed fortunate in its interpreter, for Miss Helen Snow possesses an unusually limpid and sympathetic lyric soprano voice, and a *mezza voce* which is altogether charming. In *Jag langtar dig* she is only less pleasing because of a single instant of uncertainty at the climax. Here is one of the phonographic finds of the year.

Just why this unusual and refreshing music was coupled with anything as well-known as

Schubert's *Der Wanderer* would be a difficult question to answer. Furthermore, Mr. Joseph Posner, in spite of certain definite virtues, appears at a disadvantage in contrast to the distinguished singing of Miss Snow. His conception of the song is musically sound, and he sings with intelligence and good diction, but he hardly adds anything to the infinite traditions which surround the song.

The accompaniments played by Andre Skalski are, like most recorded accompaniments, inclined to be somewhat pale. Likely as not this is the fault of the recording set-up, and criticism should therefore be reserved. Aside from this the recording is satisfactory, and *Iragen* must be credited at the beginning of its recording career with at least one outstanding accomplishment.

—P. M.

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CILEA: *L'Arlesiana, Romanza di Federico*; and FRANCK: *Panis Angelicus*; sung by Beniamino Gigli, with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under Bruno Seidler-Winkler. Victor 14312, price \$2.00.

GIGLI gives us a magnificent rendition of the often recorded but still unhackneyed tenor aria from *L'Arlesiana*. His voice never sounded better, and never before had so much of the Caruso quality. Superb recording shows its rich quality from its finest spun tones to the thunderous high B.

The aria, from Act II, Sc. 2 of the opera, has a good literary text. Federico, seeing the sleeping Innocente, soliloquizes thus: "It is the usual story of the shepherd (*E la solita storia del pastore*). The poor boy wanted to tell it but went to sleep instead. Sleep brings oblivion—how I envy him. All my efforts to forget are vain. Always that semblance is before my eyes. Sweet peace, how long you have deserted me. Even now that vision haunts my heart. Leave me, for you bring me so much ill."

The obviousness of Gigli's style of singing suits the Cilea music, but it can not cope with the churchly dignity of the Franck work. Uneven phrases, larded with sobs, preclude any idea of vocal line, and the spirit of the music is not even dimly suggested. There is excellent recording for Gigli's bad singing, and for the fine supporting chorus and orchestra. Surely, a better coupling for the Cilea aria could have been chosen.

—A. P. D.

DJERZHINSKY: *Ot Kraya Do Kraya*, from the opera *Quiet Flows the Don*; and YABLOCHO: *Sailor's Song and Dance* (used in Gliere's Ballet, *The Red Poppy*); sung by Male Quartet with instrumental background, direction Vladimir Heifetz. New Star disc, No. R-2, price \$1.00.

DUNAIEVSKY: *Song of My Country*; and *Vyntovochka*, *Red Army Song*; sung by same. New Star disc, No. R-3, price \$1.00.

THESE are two of a group of the first recordings of Soviet music made in this country. Representing music which has appealed largely to the people, their intrinsic qualities are not above the commonplace. Add to this the fact that they are arrangements of the originals, rather arbitrarily made by a resident Russian, who has directed a Russian chorus on the radio, and you have most of the story. Vladimir Heifetz, the arranger and director of that chorus and the singers here, has chosen a piano (which seems out of place to us) and two dombras (a modern string instrument similar to the mandoline) for a none-too-satisfactory background to the various songs.

The chorus from Djerzhinsky's opera has a folk-song character which makes us question its originality. Neither it nor the Yablocho selection is especially impressive in the arrangements accorded them here. We are informed that Russians regard them as folk-songs.

Perhaps one might step into a Russian barracks and hear the Red Army Song, *Vyntovochka*, and the *Song of My Country* (originally introduced in the Russian film, *Circus*, which censors refused to allow to be shown in this country) sung in the manner that we hear it done on the present record, but we question that one would be greatly impressed. It is doubtful that the appeal that these songs might have for a native born Russian will be shared by many in this country.

Recording is good, but the surfaces of the discs are none too smooth.

—P. H. R

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DONIZETTI: *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Come é bello*, and *M'odi, ah! m'odi!*; sung by G. Arangi Lombardi, with orchestra. Columbia disc No. 9129-M, price \$1.50.

HERE are excerpts from an opera much better known to our grandparents than

to us. For many years *Lucrezia Borgia* was a great favorite with American audiences, and the title role was often sung by such prima donnas as Grisi, La Grange, Medori, Parepa Rosa, Tietjens, Pappenheim, and Emma Abbott.

The opera, based on Victor Hugo's story, represents *Lucrezia* in her legendary role of the great villainess, a conception that modern historians have much modified. *Come é bello* is from the Prologue, Sc. 2. *Lucrezia* gazes at her sleeping son, Gennaro, whom she has not seen for many years. He is handsomer than she had imagined. Her soul fills with joy at seeing him, and she prays heaven that he may never learn to despise her. She does not dare to awaken him and to reveal her identity.

*M'odi* comes near the end of the opera (Act II, Sc. 6), when *Lucrezia* discovers that unaware, and for the second time, she has poisoned Gennaro at the banquet given for his friends, who are her enemies. She asks no mercy for herself, but she implores him to drink the powerful antidote that can save him. To be frank, Donizetti's music does not, to our modern ears, dramatically express this scene of horrors.



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Giannina Arangi Lombardi is an established singer on the Italian stage and in the recording studios. She has a Norma, Gioconda, and Aida type of voice, particularly strong at the top. On discs, the voice greatly resembles Gina Cigna's. Effect is gained more by power than by neatness of execution, and yet the singing is never rough. We notice maturity and routinized competence, but no evidence of any distinguishing personal treatment of the music. An unnamed orchestra furnishes the accompaniments. The recording is good.

—A. P. D.

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GRAENER: *Philanthropisch*; *Palmstroem*; and *Der Page Sprach*; sung by Gerhard Huesch. 10-inch Victor disc. No. 4365, price \$1.00.

IN our review of the *Schlussus* lieder album we expressed a desire for more Graener songs, and now Victor fulfills that wish. Two of these new songs show another aspect of Graener's output, a fine sense of comedy.

Morgenstern has written many humorous poems about a ridiculous character named Palmstroem — the translation of the title on the label as *Palm River* is therefore misleading. Graener has set several of these poems to music. The one at hand, taken from the volume of verse, *Galgenlieder*, and reprinted in the volume, *Palmstroem*, may be summed up thus: "Palmstroem stands by a pool, grandly unfolding a red pocket handkerchief that has a design consisting of an oak tree and a man with a book. Palmstroem dares not blow his nose on it, because his esthetic sense drives all utilitarian thoughts from his mind. Tenderly he folds up the handkerchief again. No feeling person can blame him for stalking away without having blown his nose." The music is pompous, even mock heroic. With such a clowning singer as Huesch, no point of the broad and rather vulgar humor is overlooked.

*Philanthropisch* races too quickly for this reviewer's sluggish German ear to catch the words, and poring over tomes of Morgenstern and making a round of visits to music stores did not bring a copy of the song to light. Suffice it to say that the song is short, lusty, and merry, and it hastens to an abrupt end. The tripping accompaniment might easily be mistaken for one of Hugo Wolf's.

*Der Page Sprach* is the first of Graener's *Five Songs* (Op. 49) to texts by Boerries von Muenchausen, a contemporary poet, not the Baron von Munchausen of the fabulous tales. The romantic poem of the Page to his high-born mistress may be rendered thus: "My beauteous Queen, you should know why I am happy. For you called me, dreaming, to the white steps of your marble throne, and I dared to kneel before you. You took your crown of diamonds, and it became a garland of jasmine, which we wove around my temples. Hand in hand we went down into the garden, where the butterflies were flitting. We went even to the land where every swallow knows me, where every rose calls me king. Your throne was completely abandoned. You know, now, my queen, why I am happy." Graener's music underlines the text of the story without creating a memorable melody.

Gerhard Huesch is a favorite baritone of the Berlin opera. His records show his fine personality, his unusual gifts for characterization, and his consummate handling of a magnificent voice. Hans Udo Mueller plays model accompaniments for him. The recording is first-rate.

—A. P. D.

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HAYDN: *Die Beredsamkeit* (*Eloquence*), and *Die Harmonie in der Ehe* (*Matrimonial Peace*); sung by the Madrigal Singers, direction Lehman Engel. Gamut record No. 10.100, ten inch, price \$1.00.

HERE are two ingenuous motets by the prolific Haydn. It seems strange that two recorders should select *Eloquence* for reproduction, and that both should come to our attention the same month. The Madrigal Singers give a delightful performance of this little work; their version, in the original German, is preferable to the Music Makers' (Iragen) anglicized version.

The companion piece, a treatise on matrimony, concerns itself with the unanimity of taste on both the husband and the wife's part, with an amusing reference to his fondness for being lord and master, and her penchant for assuming the same role.

Neither of these compositions is of great import, but when sung as successfully as they are here they inevitably please audiences. Translations of the text should have accom-

panied the record, for it is doubtful that all the words will be understood. Recording here is good.

—P. H. R.

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HAYDN: *Eloquence*; (b) SZYMANOWSKI: *Master Musician, Please Play a Waltz*; and (c) GOMOLKA: *Ad usque quo, Domine*; (d) MONIUSZKO: *Knowst Thou the Land*; (e) WALLEK-WALEWSKI: *Krakowiak*; sung by the Music Makers (4 women, 5 men) under direction of Andre Skalski, in Polish, except *Eloquence* which is in English. Iragen record No. 2R-29-05, price \$1.50.

THE excellence of choral unity maintained in this record is due to its fine director, Andre Skalski, a versatile musician of considerable attainments. The two items of most interest to us are the Szymanowski song and the Gomolka motet. There is genuine beauty in the latter work. Haydn's miniature cantata, the words of which are not intelligible in the recording, has to do with the inability of water to stimulate a flow of conversation; and the Moniuszko song, for women's quartet, is a setting of Goethe's famous poem.

This is the most interesting, to our way of thinking, of the four discs issued recently by the International Records Agency, despite its incongruous program. The recording here is excellent, and the record surfaces are smooth.

—P. H. R.

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MENDELSSOHN: *Saint Paul, O Great Is the Depth*; and *Hymn of Praise, All Men, All Things*; sung by the B.B.C. National Chorus, with organ. Columbia disc No. 7343-M, price \$1.25.

THESE Mendelssohn choruses cannot compare with the great *Messiah* and *Creation* choruses that the Royal Choral Society has recently recorded. The B.B.C. National Chorus shows greater animation than ease; the effect is often choppy and clipped. Tonally the four choirs are not perfectly matched. The sopranos need more body; the tenors are too thin and hard, and are overly prominent.

The *St. Paul* chorus, completing Part I of the oratorio, celebrates Saul's conversion. There is a cut of a few measures shortly before the end.

.....*All Men, All Things*, after the three-movement symphony is finished, opens the cantata section of the *Hymn of Praise*; it is a jubilant song of worship and praise.

Berkeley Mason's organ accompaniments are steady, and not unduly conspicuous. The recording is not above the average.

—A. P. D.

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LIEDER RECITAL: *Twelve Songs by Graener, Schumann, Schubert, and Strauss*; sung by Heinrich Schlusnus, with piano accompaniments played by Franz Rupp and Michael Raucheisen. Six 10-inch discs, Brunswick-Polydor Set BP-8, price \$6.00.

FOR one of its first album sets Brunswick-Polydor presents a Lieder recital sung by Heinrich Schlusnus, with the support of Franz Rupp and Michael Raucheisen, two of the finest living German accompanists. When played in the order of the album the songs make an excellent program, lasting a little less than an hour, well constructed to afford variety in mood and type, and representative of the various styles of songs of the four composers. *Morgan* is the only Lied here that calls for a substitute.

Schlusnus, as we all know, possesses one of the greatest male voices of the day for song singing, as well as a native and highly developed musical intelligence. He fully understands the merits of straight singing without over-emphasis, he knows how to build up legitimate climaxes, and he has a gift of showing musical contrasts. He sings expressively within the style of each composer.

Since the album is released without a book of texts it might be well to give the gist of each song.

*Der Koenig* and *Winter* are both from Graener's Opus 71, *Zehn Loenslieder* (texts by Hermann Loens, poet and writer of animal lore). The former is a ballad that tells of a young king without a kingdom, standing out in the open with his spear stuck in the ground. A beautiful girl appears, her heart in her hand, and chides him for making no use of his strong arm and his spear. He is aroused from his inactivity, with the result that the maiden and a kingdom become his.

*Winter*: My thoughts went over the fields to you, Annemarie, and I wandered to be near

you. The swallows brought you my greetings. The ravens, birds of death, brought back your answer. Now the wind howls, and snow covers the land where once my Anne-marie walked. Farewell.

*Vale Carissima* employs a Karl Stieler text that several other composers (among them Frank LaForge) have used. It represents the monk Waltramus tolling the evening bell, and trying to direct his thoughts to God, but powerless to prevent his mind from dreaming of the castle in the valley where he had seen the woman who now, in his anguished heart, holds sway.

These Graener songs maintain their position among their august companions. The music suits the romantic texts, the voice writing is fluent, and the accompaniments, with their modern touches, are never overpowering. Singers might well keep in mind that Graener has written large quantities of songs that are seldom heard in local concert halls.

Schumann's *Der Soldat* (Op. 40, No. 3) has a Hans Christian Andersen text. In it a woman's imagination graphically pictures how her lover, far away, has been captured and shot by the enemy, and she bemoans the agony in her breast. Schumann puts military touches in the accompaniment.

*Provencalisches Lied* (Op. 139, No. 4) is an Uhland poem, with a harp-like accompaniment. It is an enthusiastic panegyric of the troubadour lovesongs. A southern warmth dominates Schumann's setting of these words.

*Talismane* (Myrthen, Op. 25, No. 8) the first poem in Goethe's group called *Morganni Nameh. Book of the Minstrel*, is an exalted prayer. "God of the East, the West, of Northern and Southern lands, all is at peace in Thy hands. You, the only God, wish right for everyman. When I err, You rescue me. Help me in my work and in my verse." The music reflects the bold, declamatory praise of the first stanza, and the humility of the second.

*An Schwager Kronos* is associated with one of the unhappiest experiences in Schubert's life. The young composer dedicated and forwarded to Goethe his settings of this song, *An Mignon*, and *Ganymed*, but the poet did not send even a word of acknowledgment.

Fortunately for us other men have not been so neglectful. The words of Father Kronos are an impetuous challenge to Life. Schubert suggests the role of Kronos with post-horn effects, and the accompaniment, as in *Erking*, portrays the galloping of the horse. The song is bursting with vitality.

*Geheimes*, the text from Goethe's *West-oestlicher Divan*, represents Schubert at a most lyrical moment, with harmonies subtly and constantly shifting from major to minor; it is pure Schubert. "Everybody wonders at the meaning of the tender glances in my sweetheart's eyes, but I alone know the secret. They say, more clearly than words, that she loves me only. Those glances always are speaking of our next meeting."

Strauss gets the lion's share in the album with four songs. *Nachtgang* (Op. 29, No. 3) uses an Otto Julius Bierbaum lyric that is unsurpassable in sentimentality. "We wandered through the balmy night, arm in arm, your eyes in mine. Moonlight flooded your face, giving it a halo that made you seem a saint, holy, pure as the sun."

*Winterliebe* (Op. 48, No. 5) words by Karl Henchell, is sheer rapture. "Aglow with love, I hasten toward the sun. Frost and dazzling light cover the forest and mountains. Breath turns to steam. Despite my surroundings, I am burning within. My rapture is boundless." And boundless is the sweep of Strauss's ardor.

*Geduld*, text by Hermann von Gilm, is from the same early opus, No. 10, as the favorite *Zueignung. Die Verschwiegene*, and *Allerseelen*. The verse belongs to the *Gather Ye Rosebuds* genre: "The girl always replies, Not Yet, when the lover urges his love."

*Morgen* (Op. 27, No. 4), words by John Henry Mackay, has in its numerous recordings generally fared better than here. Schlusnus, who has every vocal and interpretative requisite for the preceding eleven songs, lets us down here. His *pianissimo* and *legato* are not fine enough for *Morgen*; the voice becomes breathy and unsteady, and loses its fine quality. The blasty recording makes matters worse. We get no impression of the evanescent and mystical mood of the song.

To sum up, we have in this album eleven great songs superbly sung and accompanied, recorded with fullness and fidelity, and with them just one song that, in this presentation, we can forgive and will forget.

—A. P. D.

(Continued on Page 155)



# In the Popular Vein

By HORACE VAN NORMAN

## STANDARD POPULAR

AAAA—*Gone With the Wind*, and *The Miller's Daughter Marianne*. Horace Heidt and his Brigadiers. Brunswick 7913.

After a very lengthy absence from record lists (about six years if memory serves), Heidt and his fabulously versatile outfit have been snared by Brunswick for what appears to be a quite successful series of recordings. This seems to be about the best that they've turned out so far, being more like phonograph records and less like numbers in a vaudeville act (you do remember vaudeville, don't you?) than his other discs. It's all well and good to attempt to breathe a few new ideas occasionally into the rather stereotyped pattern of the average dance record, but we still feel that spoken announcements introducing members of the band and all that sort of thing are out of place on a recording. It is to be assumed that one buys even a popular record to play more than once and these extraneous items are bound to become increasingly annoying with each successive playing. Happily, this disc is entirely free from these things, being merely attractive arrangements of attractive numbers. *Gone With the Wind*, an Allie Wrubel tune, features extravagant wind imitations on the electric guitar by Heidt's phenomenal guitarist, Alvino Ray, and *The Miller's Daughter Marianne*, which has a delightfully folk-songish quality reminiscent of an old Scotch ballad, from which it would not surprise me to learn it had been stolen, has an excellent vocal by the basso member of Heidt's troupe.

\* \* \* \*

AAAA—*Posin'*, and *If You Ever Should Leave*. Tommy Dorsey and his Clambake Seven. Victor 25605.

Two recordings which are swingy enough to warrant inclusion in the neighboring department, these are numbers emanating from a Chicago floor show which give the Dorsey septett plenty of opportunity to play hot in a thoroughly nice way. *Posin'* is something a little different in recordings of the type, in that all the "breaks" are silent (due, of course, to the requirements of the number itself) which gives rise to the speculation that other bands may try to adopt a similar proficiency in the performance of completely inaudible "breaks" or hot choruses which may be supplied by the listener in his imagination.

\* \* \* \*

AAA—*Night Over Shanghai*, and *I Wouldn't Change You for the World*. Russ Morgan and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7921.

*Night Over Shanghai* is from the current Dick Powell film, *Singing Marine*, and is from the collaborative pens of those hit-writin' fools, Al Dubin and Harry Warren. A very nice number it is, too,

although it gives evidence that Warren might have been studying one of Cole Porter's more familiar tune patterns, with its long melodic line, breaking into quarter-note triplets in the middle, etc. It is well handled here by Morgan, who can generally be relied upon for at least a thoroughly musically job.

\* \* \* \*

AAA—*Sun Showers*, and *I'm Like a Million*. George Hamilton and his Music Box Music. Victor 25602.

Hamilton has traded his former inept designation for another which is equally inept, so it appears that if he becomes as popular as some people seem to think he will be, he certainly won't be receiving any help in that direction from the cumbersome monikers which he has had to labor under. He is, as must be perfectly obvious to anyone, a carbon copy of Shep Fields, for whom we haven't any admiration whatever, yet Hamilton brings to the Fields glissandi, accordion noodling, etc., a certain distinction lacking in the work of his prototype which we find decidedly palatable. Both numbers under consideration are from the *Broadway Melody* of 1938, and are written of course by those *Broadway Melody* standbys, Freed and Brown.

\* \* \* \*

AAA—*You're Precious to Me*, and *That Stolen Melody*. Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 25603.

The former is a well sustained number that gives Dorsey a grand chance to show off his luxuriant trombone tone, the like of which is not to be heard on land or sea. *That Stolen Melody* is titled with perfect accuracy, since it is Fred Fisher's decade-old re-writing of Elgar's *Salut d'Amour* (one cannot help but admire the frankness displayed in the title) and an inevitable choice for Dorsey in his current cycle of classic numbers in swing arrangements.

## HOT JAZZ

AAAA—*Chopin's Ghost*. Bert Shefter and his Rhythm Octet, and *Mahogany Hall Stomp*. Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra. Victor 25622.

It was only to be expected that as fantastically successful a group as the Raymond Scott Quintet would breed a spawn of imitators and the Shefter Octet is the first to make an appearance. Gifted pianist, heard often on the air with Morton Gould and others in two piano teams, Shefter has got together a group which consists, among others, of such top notch free lancers as Paul Ricci and Toots Mondello. Adrian Rollini in his Vibraphone playing role, Dave Wade, trumpeter of the Scott combine, and that excellent pianist, Vladimir Brenner, a concert artist whose name appears somewhat

strangely in such surroundings. Their first disc, duly noted below, is a slavish imitation of the Scott technique, only not quite so good, but the above disc gives promise of more interesting things to come. *Chopin's Ghost* turns out to be an extremely artful swinging of Chopin's *C Sharp Minor Waltz*, one which sets an example of good taste and humor to other bands that attempt this sort of thing (and which of them doesn't). The reverse side of Berrigan is, like everything he has yet done with his new group, quite bad. Will Berrigan sometime give us a good record, or are we expecting too much?

\* \* \*

AAAA—*All God's Chillun Got Rhythm*, and *Alabama Home*. Duke Ellington and his Orchestra. Master MA 137.

If there is anything about swing that Duke can't teach the boys, we don't know what it is. Here is a good example of Duke going to town on a number not of his own composition and, in doing so, showing up the boys at their own game, namely, a series of hot choruses against a pure rhythm background. And what rhythm it is! Not the shrill, feverish rhythm which succeeds only in being hysterical that characterizes most of his swing conferees but a rugged, earthy, thoroughly vital rhythm that is the quintessence of swing. The solos are all excellent and the whole thing goes with a fervor that's completely irresistible.

\* \* \*

AAA—I Got Rhythm, and Time On My Hands. Glenn Miller and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7915.

A very smart, nifty arrangement on *I Got Rhythm* by the talented Miller and a very exquisite arrangement on *Time On My Hands*, which is one of the loveliest tunes that Vincent Youmans or anyone else ever wrote. If the boys would revive a few more popular tunes of merit and quit ransacking the classics, it might be a good idea.

\* \* \*

AAA—*Swing Session's Called to Order*, and *Hot Club Stomp*. Mezz Mezzrow and his Orchestra. Victor 25612.

Swingies of merit from a group that bears the sponsorship of the United Hot Clubs of America, but which are quite good enough to stand on their own feet.

\* \* \*

AAA—*Smarty*, and *I'm Gonna Put You in Your Place*. Fats Waller and his Rhythm. Victor 25608.

These are all according to the accepted Waller formula, but that seems to be enough for the Waller clientele, which is still reputedly enormous. It's truly wonderful what a little zest and thorough enjoyment of one's own work will do to brighten up what might be rather pallid efforts, and the inexhaustible Fats somehow always manages to make you enjoy it as much as he does.

\* \* \*

### Other Current Popular Recordings

(The following are rated from quality of performance regardless of record quality.)

AAA—*Hot Lips*, and *The Bells of St. Mary's*. Horace Heidt and his Brigadiers. Brunswick 7916.

AAA—*S. O. S.*, and *Locomotive*. Bert Shefter and his Rhythm Octet. Victor 25614.

AAA—*Stormy Weather*, and *Sweet Sue — Just You*. Don Redman and his Orchestra. Variety VA 605.

AAA—*Love Is Never Out of Season*, and *Our Penthouse on Third Avenue*. Emery Deutsch and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7909.

AAA—*Public Melody Number One*, and *Red Cap*. Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra. Decca 1347.

AAA—*Love Is the Thing So They Say*, and *That Naughty Waltz*. Chick Webb and his Orchestra. Decca 1356.

AA—*Don't Ever Change*, and *Our Love Was Meant To Be*. Tommy Dorsey and his Clambake Seven. Victor 25607.

AA—*The Old Sow Song*, and *With Her Head Tucked Underneath Her Arm*. Rudy Vallee and his Connecticut Yankees. Bluebird B-7078.

AA—*Get It Southern Style*, and *If You're Ever In My Arms Again*. Barney Bigard and his Jazzopaters. Variety VA 596.

AA—*Mean To Me*, and *I'll Get By*. Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7903.

AA—*Yours and Mine*, and *I'm Hatin' This Waitin' Around*. Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians. Victor 25599.

AA—*My Lost Love*, and *Don't Play With Fire*. Ambrose and his Orchestra. Decca 1337.

AA—*Peg O' My Heart*, and *I'm Sitting on Top of the World*. Glenn Miller and his Orchestra. Decca 1342.

A—*All God's Chillun Got Rhythm*, and *The Lady From Fifth Avenue*. Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra. Victor.

A—*Night and Day*, and *Someday Sweetheart*. Art Shaw and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7914.

A—*So Rare*, and *Dancing Under the Stars*. Gus Arnheim and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7919.

## SWING MUSIC NOTES

By ENZO ARCHETTI

The great makers of swing have nearly all deserted the city for more pleasant summer resorts. Bunny Berigan, though his program over WOR on Sundays continues, has left the Pennsylvania for the Pavillon Royal in Valley Stream, Long Island. His broadcasts several nights a week over WABC from that spot show that the orchestra has improved greatly since it was formed. For corroboration of this one has but to listen to his newer Victor records. Incidentally, Bunny has again changed his vocalist. It is now Ruth Bradley. Tommy Dorsey has moved into the spot vacated by Bunny. This is probably not an all-summer engagement however, as Bunny's is, because Tommy is scheduled for Manhattan Beach later in the season. Benny Goodman is on the West Coast making pictures. His program on the air, Tuesdays at 9:30 P.M., remains one of the high spots of the air waves for originality, entertainment, and solid swing. Whoever thought of the idea of inviting screen comedians to the program as guests who come in roaring like lions as representatives of an anti-swing society and go out roaring like lions fully converted to the cause of swing deserves a medal for having created an amusing, original manner of presenting swing. The Saturday Night Swing Club continues on the air with such guests

as it can catch on the wing while they are passing through New York on the way to out-of-town engagements, and with a very much changed orchestra. For six of its original members—Raymond Scott, Dave Wade, Dave Harris, Pete Pomiglio, Lou Shoober, and Johnny Williams—are West Coast-bound, to make pictures. What could speak more eloquently for Raymond Scott and his Quintet? Their rapid rise in popularity now culminates in the achievement desired by all who create to entertain—the movies. They made good on the radio and on records. May they succeed as auspiciously in pictures!

With the closing of the Cotton Club in New York, Ellington and his men began again that endless round of one night stands and theatre spots which is the constant worry of his many admirers. It may be good experience, or even a change, but there can be no denying that it is a gruelling grind which is reflected in a lowering of the quality of the orchestra's work. An orchestra's recordings can be used as its pulse-reading. They will indicate whether it was in a healthy, rested condition or whether it was tired, nervous, and worn out. Ellington's recent engagement for several months at the Cotton Club was further proof of this contention. The quality of Duke's compositions and Master and Variety recordings made during this period clearly indicated a high point of vitality. They represent some of the finest work in the career of Ellington and his men.

Ellington returned to New York briefly for an engagement at the Apollo and Loew's State where he turned out consistently good work. During this period he also appeared on the Saturday Night Swing Club with six of his men, led by Johnny Hodges including, besides the Duke and Johnny, Rex Stewart, Harry Carney, Joe Nanton, Hayes Alvis, and Sonny Greer. Presumably this is the group which will record for Variety under the name of Johnny Hodge and his Orchestra. A new work was played that night which Duke modestly claimed "they had put together that afternoon". It was called *Backroom Romp* and a splendidly energetic number it was. It should be recorded.

Duke and his orchestra are again on the road but here is some news which will gladden the hearts of all true Ellingtonians. The orchestra and Duke will definitely give a concert in Carnegie Hall this fall similar to that historic concert given at the Paladium in London a few years ago. The date has been set in October and a backer has been found. It will not be Irving Mills. This same backer, whose name cannot be divulged, is a prominent New York broker who is interested in good jazz, particularly Ellington's. He is planning to back a show for which Ellington is now writing the music. They are at present searching for a suitable book. So, all good Ellingtonians, rejoice! Grand days are coming.

The music went 'round and 'round, but it was nothing compared to what the U.H.C.A. of New York is doing. It is now practically in the same place it started because the help Irving Mills promised so enthusiastically has been withdrawn. It seems the proposed incorporation of the Hot Clubs would not prove to be as profitable a proposition as it at first seemed. So Irving Mills backed down. The U.H.C.A. will continue unincorporated, with just as ambitious a program as before, but with Victor as cooperator instead of Master records. In

fact, the first U.H.C.A. sponsored discs, which should have been recorded by Master, have been recorded and issued this month by Victor. They are *Hot Club Stomp*, *The Swing Session Is Called to Order*, *That's How I Feel Today*, and *Blues in Disguise* by Mezz Mezzrow and his Orchestra. For pure swing they are two of the finest issued in many a month. They should not be missed by anyone interested in good jazz. The personnel of the orchestra is Mezz Mezzrow, clarinet; H. Caldwell, saxophone; S. Oliver, trumpet; J. C. Higgenbotham, trombone; B. Addison, guitar; "Pop" Foster, bass; S. White, piano; and J. Crawford, drums.

The U.H.C.A. will continue to sponsor new records. Victor is planning a new series by Mezz Mezzrow, with a different personnel, which will be supervised by the U.H.C.A. The regular jam sessions will be resumed in the Autumn and the first session will probably be with Tommy Dorsey's band.

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## RECORD REVIEWS

(Continued from Page 152)

### HAYDN TRIO

HAYDN: *London Trio No. 1, in C major*; played by Henri Bové, and Frederick Wilkins, flutes, and Sterling Hunkins, cello. Musicraft disc, No. 1024, price \$1.50.

WITH the great and prevalent popularity of Mozart today it is remarkable that Haydn is so generally overlooked. Certainly in these two composers are found the qualities that appeal to all of us, whether our tastes run to the classical, the romantic or the modern. Yet, I am told, though any Mozart recording is sure of a cordial welcome, the public for Haydn is decidedly limited. This record, if it can be brought to the attention of all buyers goes far toward remedying this, for it brings us music which is not only unusual but altogether charming. Profound it is not—and how could it be, composed as it is for such a delicate combination of instruments?—but no lover of sheer beauty, captivating line and infectious rhythmic pulse can fail to take delight in this trio. No need to attempt a description—I only urge every reader to hear it.

(Continued on Next Page)

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## INDEX FOR VOLUME 2 of The American Music Lover

An index for Volume 2 has been printed and is now ready for distribution. The price of the index, which is uniform in size to the magazine, is 25 cents a copy. (No index for Volume 1 has been printed. Insufficient interest prevented its compilation.)

# Our Radio Dial

(Eastern Daylight Saving Time)

## NBC HIGHLIGHTS FOR AUGUST

(Red Network)

Sundays—

- 5:30 P.M.—Helen Traubel
- 7:00 P.M.—Fireside Recitals
- 9:30 P.M.—American Album of Familiar Music

Mondays—

- 8:30 P.M.—Voice of Firestone

Wednesdays—

- 2:30 P.M.—General Federation of Women's Clubs

Thursdays—

- 2:00 P.M.—NBC Music Guild

Fridays—

- 8:00 P.M.—Cities Service Concert
- 9:00 P.M.—Waltz Time

Saturdays—

- 7:00 P.M.—Musical
- 9:30 P.M.—Phila. Summer Concerts

(Blue Network)

Sundays—

- 2:30 P.M.—RCA Magic Key

Mondays—

- 8:30 P.M.—Goldman Band Concert
- 9:00 P.M.—Melodic Contrasts

Tuesdays—

- 2:30 P.M.—Music Guild
- 7:15 P.M.—Rabinoff, violinist
- 10:30 P.M.—Past Master's Program

Wednesdays—

- 9:00 P.M.—Ernest Gill's Orchestra

Thursdays—

- 3:00 P.M.—NBC Light Opera Company
- 8:30 P.M.—Boston Sym. Orch. (Aug. 5th and 12th)

Fridays—

- 9:30 P.M.—Grant Park Concert (Chicago)
- 10:30 P.M.—The Liedersingers

Saturdays—

- 6:30 P.M.—Whither Music
- 8:30 P.M.—Goldman Band Concert
- 10:00 P.M.—Grant Park Concert (Chicago)

## COLUMBIA HIGHLIGHTS FOR AUGUST

Sundays—

- 12:30 P.M.—Salt Lake City Tabernacle
- 3:00 P.M.—Everybody's Music — Barlow and Symphony Orchestra
- 10:00 P.M.—N. Y. Phil. Orch. (to Aug. 15th)

Mondays—

- 3:30 P.M.—Pops Concerts — Howard Barlow
- 5:00 P.M.—Clyde Barrie, Negro baritone

Tuesdays—

- 3:30 P.M.—Columbia Concert Hall
- 8:30 P.M.—Chicago Grant Park Concert

Wednesdays—

- 3:45 P.M.—Columbia Concert Hall
- 9:00 P.M.—Frank Parker and Kostelanetz Orch.
- 9:30 P.M.—Jessica Dragonette — Chas. Coleman

Thursdays—

- 4:00 P.M.—Howells and Wright, piano team
- 6:00 P.M.—Margaret Daum, soprano
- 8:00 P.M.—Columbia Concert Orchestra

Fridays—

- 3:00 P.M.—Kreiner String Quartet in Mozart Cycle
- 10:00 P.M.—Howard Barlow's Sym. Orch.

Saturdays—

- 11:30 A.M.—Columbia Concert Hall
- 3:45 P.M.—Clyde Barrie, baritone
- 7:30 P.M.—Columbia Concert Hall

Page 116

(Continued from Previous Page)

The performance will be found entirely satisfactory, and the recording sets a new standard for Musicraft. The tone of the two flutes is particularly rich and appealing, and the ever reliable Mr. Hunkins performs his cello part with distinction.

—P. M.

## ROY HARRIS' LATEST WORK TO BE BROADCAST

Time, the essence of all things in general, and of radio in particular, has been set to music by Roy Harris.

The head of the Composition Department of the Westminster Choir School, as one of six prominent American composers commissioned by the Columbia Broadcasting System to write music specifically for the microphone, has just completed "Time Suite", which Howard Barlow and the Columbia Symphony Orchestra will give its first performance in an "Everybody's Music" broadcast over the WABC-Columbia network Sunday, August 8, from 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. EDST.

In it he has closely observed what he finds is a "new function" as established by radio: Time.

"The minute," he states, "becomes a unit of space in music as the square foot is a unit to the mural artist. We need to fill that minute as an organic thing for which the music has seemingly grown."

Thus, "Time Suite" is divided into six movements as follows: first movement, one minute; second movement, two minutes; third, three minutes; fourth, four minutes; fifth, five minutes. The sixth movement repeats the four-minute duration of the fourth movement in order to provide a finale of a contrasting style in that dimension. The movements are dedicated, respectively, to "Broadway"; "Religion"; "Youth"; "Radio"; "Philosophy"; and "Labor."

Harris says, however, that this is not programmatic music, or music that has a scenario. "The thing that determines the form is time and the mood is determined by the idea I am trying to express, rather than a literary equivalent," he points out.

# THE FRIENDS OF RECORDED MUSIC

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**MOZART:** String Quartet in E flat, K-171, played by Kreiner Quartet. Discs 3 and 4.

**GRIFFES:** An Indian Sketch, Kreiner Quartet, and The Lament of Ian the Proud, William Hain, tenor, with Jerome T. Bohm at piano. Disc 5.

**JOSEPH MARX:** Lieder, In meinen Traueme Heimat, and Der Rauch; sung by Paul Engel, baritone, with Mr. Bohm at piano. Disc 6.

**SCRIABINE:** Fourth Sonata; Katherine Ruth Heyman. Disc 7.

**ARIOSTI:** Cantata for Voice, Viola d'Amore and Piano. Lucile Dresskell, soprano; Miles Dresskell, viola d'amore; Sara Knight, piano. Disc 8.

**SCHOENBERG:** Klavierstueck, Opus 11, No. 2, and **SCRIABINE:** Flammes Sombres, Opus 73. Katherine Ruth Heyman. Disc 9.

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